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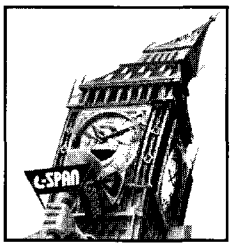

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

Democracy theater

I say, old boy, PBS suddenly has a rival for the Anglophile market. C-SPAN, the cable network that transmits the House and Senate, is showing excerpts from the British House of Commons, which allowed in the television cameras last month. Masterpiece Theatre buffs may be slightly disappointed: only one man, the Speaker, wears a wig, and the queen appears only once a year. What's more, there is no fruity music and no reassuring Alistair Cooke figure to explain what's going on. (Lucky TNR readers, though, have Henry Fairlie. See page 22.)

Still, there are pleasures. The names, the accents, the suits are magnificent. There is someone called Sir Fergus Montgomery complaining of injustice to war widows, with reference to a letter in yesterday's *Times*. A Scottish lady is discoursing earnestly about what sounds like "genital affairs." Wait, make that "general affairs." The Tory benches are a forest of foppish pinstripes. The U.S. House, by contrast, generally goes in for silly diminutive nicknames ("Newt," "Vin," "Buz") and baggy suits of solid blue. I watched a few hours of C-SPAN coverage of each House recently, for purposes of scientific comparison. Comparison No. 1: in lieu of stripes, the American members tend to festoon themselves with little pins and badges representing various political causes and patriotic themes.

Disappointingly, there is not a lot of Wildean witticism in Parliament. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's style, aped by a chorus of young Tory sycophants, is one of heavy-handed sarcasm. "Perhaps we had better wait and see so we can pontificate in the light of the facts," she sneers in response to a complaint about the impending water industry privatization.

More entertaining are the old-fashioned class-war thrusts from the venerable members of the Labour Party. It's less Oscar Wilde than Clifford Odets. "The Home Secretary has never lived in a cardboard box." (Crowd: "You tell 'em, Frank.") "The minister can shake his head. . . . Don't shake your head at me. . . . He's got a garage with a couple of cars in it. I've got people back in my constituency who have to walk because they can't even afford a flippin' bus." To a setup question to Thatcher from one of the Young Sycophants (something like: "Would the prime minister agree that the past ten years have been the most glorious chapter of British history since mankind was expelled from Eden?"), a Labourite yells: "Get off your knees!"

It is a tradition of this column to celebrate the superiority of the parliamentary system of government. This was a constant theme of Richard Strout, who wrote "TRB" from 1942 until 1983. The major advantage, compared with our system, is the merger of the executive and legislative functions. A national leader who wins an election by promising to do something can actually do it, and has no excuse for not doing it. This is excellent discipline for politicians and voters alike. It makes politics a more serious business.

Logically, it should also make parliamentary debates less urgent, since the outcome is more likely to be predetermined by party-line voting. But the C-SPAN Parliament Show demonstrates the opposite. Parliament debates focus much more on issues that really matter and on legislation that might really be enacted. They are also more like real debates, rather than sequential speeches. The tradition of "yielding" to another member in midspeech, which in Parliament means giving an opponent the chance to take a shot at you, has evolved in the U.S. House into little more than a method of divvying up the allotted time among members of the same party.

Even among political opponents, there is far more debilitating politesse in the American House than in the British one. Vast amounts of time are wasted praising bipartisanship, thanking the member from the other party for his cooperation, and so forth. The only actual disagreement I heard in hours of a recent House session was a polite tiff between two Florida representatives about which one had more "seniors" in his district.

A second advantage of the parliamentary system is even more on display on C-SPAN: the distinction between the head of government and the head of state. Margaret Thatcher, world-renowned for her haughtiness, undergoes a twice-a-week ritual of humiliation-by-questioning that would be an unthinkable act of lèse majesté if inflicted on our jes' folks president. "Will the prime minister now make a public apology for this gross incompetence?" Has she not been rendered "a pygmy on the world stage" by something or other? Will she not "be swept from office and dumped in the garbage" very soon? All accompanied by cheers from one side and jeers from the other. Thatcher gives as good as she gets, but the whole process has a democratically healthy leveling effect. Indeed, after watching Parliament for a while, C-SPAN's House of Representatives Show suddenly seems like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. The lead character in the drama—President Bush—is constantly referred to but never appears.

"Question Time"—the twice-a-week session where the prime minister and her Cabinet are interrogated by other members—replaces two institutions of American democracy: Congressional committee testimony by Cabinet department heads, and Presidential press conferences. It is superior to both.

American Cabinet members justifiably complain of the vast amount of time they spend preparing for and appearing at redundant committee hearings. Usually in these sessions the Cabinet member and the interrogating Senator or Representative are both just mouthpieces for aides, who can often be seen on C-SPAN striking the classic Washington pose of leaning forward from behind and whispering in the boss's ear. In Parliament, the questions and answers are to the point, and there are no aides in sight.

As for the Presidential press conference, question time offers the perfect answer to the perennial question, "Who elected Sam Donaldson?" Free of the need to appear objective or fair, opposition MPs ask tougher questions than White House correspondents would dare. Better framed, too. "Why are there more young people now begging on the streets of London and our other big cities?" Mrs. Thatcher was asked the other day. Could even Sam Donaldson have put it that straight, without a little speechlet to blunt its force?

C-SPAN, established a decade ago by the enterprising Brian Lamb, has turned into a wonderful adventure in true-life political theater. Funded by the cable industry and run on a shoestring, it fills the airtime between Congressional sessions with what might be called "found democracy." You never know what you're going to stumble across on its two channels: House committee hearings, think-tank seminars, State Department briefings, a charity "roast" in honor of a big-shot journalist, a showing of campaign commercials by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the weekly staff meeting of THE NEW REPUBLIC. And now the Mother of Parliaments.

And there's more fun ahead. Lamb was just in Jerusalem trying to get permission to broadcast the Israeli Knesset. Mel Brooks, look to your laurels!

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Life lines

To the editors:

In "Feeling No Pain" (November 27) TNR offers reasons for distinguishing between "active" and "passive" euthanasia. You maintain that unlike passive euthanasia, the active variety "brings with it many dicey procedural questions and ultimately, a slippery slope." I fail to see why passive euthanasia doesn't generate the same questions and slippery slope. "If active euthanasia is to be allowed," you ask, "how do you decide that death is imminent? How imminent does death have to be?" Why aren't the same questions just as relevant—and as difficult—in the context of passive euthanasia?

Of the 39 states that have living-will statutes, most provide that such a directive becomes operative only after its maker has become "terminally ill," usually defined as suffering from an illness that will result in death within a short time regardless of the application of medical treatment. But death is not imminent for Nancy Cruzan, whose fate the Supreme Court will decide this term. Cruzan is in a persistent vegetative state and may be "better off dead," but she is neither "dying" nor "terminally ill." If artificial nutrition and hydration are not removed, she can live for many years. Yet there is no indication that this troubles TNR. Why not? If we needn't trouble ourselves about the imminence of death when carrying out passive euthanasia, why should we be concerned about this "dicey procedural question" when administering active euthanasia? As for the slippery slope, once active euthanasia is sanctioned, you warn, "what is to stop it from entering the domain of cold cost-benefit calculations?" That's a good question. But precisely the same question can be asked about passive euthanasia (or "letting die").

If a family decides to stop paying for the treatment of a senile relative or if society decides to quit paying for the care of the elderly terminally ill, why can't these choices be effectively implemented by denying life support as well as by administering lethal injection?

YALE KAMISAR
Ann Arbor, Michigan

To the editors:

You point out that the right to die becomes incontestable in cases where there is irretrievable loss of consciousness. Citing Thomas Nagel, you assert that "it isn't like anything to be Nancy Cruzan." So one might consider the plausibility of the converse argument: If it *is* like "something" to be unborn-"Jill," isn't her right to life to be held in high regard? What is illiberal about the following moderate pro-life position: when we have good reason to believe that Jill has attained consciousness, her right to life becomes unassailable in almost all circumstances? Isn't it just this moral intuition that supports society's abhorrence of infanticide? (To be sure, this argument raises the question of just when Jill becomes conscious.) Perhaps being genetically human isn't sufficient for acceptance into the charmed circle of those who may not be destroyed freely. But by the time Jill becomes a feeling human being, surely she deserves our empathy and the legal protection that goes with it.

JOHN CUGINI
Walkersville, Maryland

To the editors:

TNR continues to enrich the tapestry of Western civilization. Ancient Greece gave us the winged horse, Christianity the winged angel, and the *Wizard of Oz* the winged monkey. TNR now gives us the "winged rodent," saying that Nagel's essay "What Is It Like To Be a Bat?" implies that "it is like *something* to be even a blind winged rodent." Sorry, folks, but philosophy aside, it just ain't so. The bat does not belong with the rat, beaver, porcupine, and other members of the celebrated order Rodentia (Latin for "gnawing"), but rather in its own order Chiroptera (Greek for "hand wing"). Don't you think these denizens of belfries and horror tales have enough of a bum rap without being lumped together with an unrelated mammal clan whose public image, to put it as politely as possible, could stand some improvement? And by the way, bats aren't blind. Their nocturnal habits, combined with their ability to navigate by echolocation, may limit the usefulness of their peepers, but those organs do exist and are functional.

HOWARD FOX
Washington, D.C.

The party's over

To the editors:

TRB is correct: neither Ronald Reagan nor anyone else on the American right killed communism ("Who Killed Communism?" December 4). *No* American deserves the credit. Nor, even, does the ex-Stalinist Mikhail Gorbachev, although he did have the imagination to understand the party may be over, and the political muscle to initiate real reforms. Lech Walesa killed communism. Adam Michnik killed communism. Jacek Kuron killed communism. And with their example, workers and intellectuals from Prague to Beijing are spreading the revolution.

Workers and intellectuals. Sound familiar? Ah, the cunning of history—Marx's chosen agents should overthrow Lenin's tyranny. Who knows where it will lead?

SEAN WILENTZ
Princeton, New Jersey

Right lobe

To the editors:

Alan Ryan ("Scholar Slip," December 4) offers a left-wing academic's attitude toward the present British government. I hope you will allow another English academic who now, though not part of the Brain Drain, lives here to point out that Ryan's attitude is not shared by all of us.

Until soon after the First World War British universities lived on their own resources, which they derived from the generosity of private benefactors. But since then, thanks to the high cost of science, they have depended upon government subvention. That arrangement was not ideal, in part because it meant that all university teachers were paid the same meager stipend. And as the Labour Party drew closer to the totalitarian left, it seemed dangerous to have the universities depend upon the state. During the 1970s I joined a group of academics who contrived to set up the University of Buckingham, the only British university wholly independent of government assistance. (One member of our group was Robert Jackson, now minister for higher education, whom Ryan most unfairly accuses of hating Oxford and loathing academics.) Since that time the desertion of the Labour Party by its liberal wing and its choice as leader of the not notably well-educated Neil Kinnock have done nothing to cause me to regret that action.

Though Ryan paints a pathetic picture of the refugees, he admits that he does not know "how big this exodus really is." Having done what they could to promote the socialism that during the past 50 years has eroded the value of all English stipends, these martyrs have taken refuge in a country where, thanks to free institutions, academic persons—though not paid well in comparison with men of business—earn a respectable amount. I must confess that my sympathy with them is incomplete, and I believe that English scholarship will rub along without them.

HUGH LLOYD-JONES
Wellesley, Massachusetts

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JANUARY 1, 1990

FETAL FLAW

"We have a number of medical advances that have occurred as a result of research with fetal tissue," Louis Sullivan reminded Congress last February, shortly before being confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services. This may not sound like an especially bold pronouncement, but at the time it was taken as a welcome act of self-assertion. That very day, on orders from the Bush Administration's right-to-life police, Sullivan had officially jettisoned his long-standing belief that pregnant women should be free to decide whether to have an abortion. By hinting that he would not so easily accede to a continuation of the Reagan Administration's ban on fetal tissue research, he was retaining some measure of credibility within the mainstream medical community and at least a shred of self-respect.

But now, nearly a year later, Sullivan's humiliation is complete. In November the Department of Health and Human Services extended the Reagan ban on federally funded research involving fetal tissue transplants, research that could yield a cure for Parkinson's disease, juvenile diabetes, Huntington's disease, and Alzheimer's disease. Pathetically, Sullivan is insisting that he supports the decision, which was actually made by James O. Mason, the "Assistant" Secretary who was installed at HHS by right-to-lifers to keep Sullivan in line. (The decision also had the significant backing of John Sununu, the administration's special liaison to the party's Neanderthal wing.)

The fetal tissue decision is only the latest of several concessions President Bush has made to Republican right-to-lifers. But it is a particularly fine exemplar of its class, nicely illustrating the flawed moral reasoning and the cynical political calculus that have shaped the administration's emerging policy on abortion.

Mason described the fetal tissue decision as a "matter of heart and of mind," but that phrase somewhat overstates the role played by cool reason. How, exactly, does one justify sending fetal tissue to the incinerator when it could be used to save future lives? One plausible way would be to claim that using the tissue will encourage abortions. But the widely promulgated specter of women getting paid to abort is illusory. The sale of fetuses, like the sale of organs for transplant, is already illegal. Mason says he's worried, nonetheless, that some women might choose abortion altruistically, in order to help future generations via medical research. If he can show us a woman who actually wants a child but surrenders the fetus for posterity, we'll show him a deranged woman.

What he *may* be able to show us is a woman who wants to end her pregnancy and who consoles herself with the thought that her decision might somehow help someone. But few such women are likely to make a different decision from the one they would have made anyway. And if the Government is really worried about them, it can insist that they be told what is—for the foreseeable future, at least—the truth: their help is not needed; the supply of fetal tissue far exceeds the demand; their decision to abort will not affect the quantity or quality of research.

No one denies that fetal tissue research raises dicey moral issues and requires stringent oversight. For example, though women cannot be directly paid to abort, more subtle financial incentives are being generated even by the limited amount of fetal tissue research still permissible—non-transplant research (studying fetal cell cultures for insights into cancer, say) and transplant research that receives no federal funding. Most fetal tissue researchers use tissue donated directly by physicians, but some procure it through such "non-profit foundations" as the Institute for the Advancement of Medicine, in Pennsylvania, which provides scientists with a few hundred tissue specimens per month for a fee. Rather than pay abortion clinics for fetuses directly, the institute pays them what it euphemistically calls a "rental fee" of up to $1,000 a month. Some small fraction of that may be passed on by the clinic to its clients in the form of lower fees, thus making abortions marginally more attractive. This is for now a negligible incentive, and will remain so even if the research ban is lifted. But if research bears fruit, the therapeutic demand for fetuses could mushroom—particularly if the transplant of pancreatic tissue, perhaps the most prom-

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ising therapy being tested, proves reliably helpful to diabetics.

If HHS is concerned about this prospect, the proper reaction is tighter regulation: a law, for example, that all physicians performing abortions must provide tissue to researchers for free—so long, obviously, as the patient concurs. It is a sign of the broad need for regulatory reform that some patients, as things stand, don't get a *chance* to concur: they are not told about, much less asked about, the subsequent use of their fetal tissue for research. There is also evidence that some abortions are prolonged by a few minutes as the physician tries to extract fetal tissue intact, which raises its clinical value. If this increases the risk to the mother, it is intolerable. The irony is that HHS, by washing its hands of the whole issue, has discouraged debate over the sort of oversight that is clearly needed.

But of course if HHS secured sound regulation of fetal tissue research, blunting any incentives for abortion and preventing other undesired side effects, then people like Mason would have to admit that their real opposition to the research is much more vague and visceral than they're pretending. At bottom, they simply feel that abortion is evil, and that everything it touches it taints; to make use of the fetal tissue—even in order to save the lives of babies not yet born—is to magnify the original crime, and to dignify it. Their favorite comparison is with medical experimentation by Nazi doctors on the remains of Holocaust victims.

That's an ugly and offensive argument but not a trivial one, and the right-to-lifers are certainly entitled to make it. But it presumes a moral consensus—that abortion is inherently evil—that simply doesn't exist. In that regard, it is a bit more radical, philosophically, than past anti-abortion policies enacted by the Republican right. The Reagan-era HHS regulation prohibiting the use of family planning funds for abortion counseling, though a policy we disagree with, is *relatively* defensible; it posits merely that abortion, being morally problematic and highly controversial, should not be encouraged by the Government. But at the core of the right-to-life movement's victory on fetal tissue research (once the fiction that research necessarily encourages abortion is dispelled) is the assertion that abortion is not merely problematic, but immoral—that it is murder, plain and simple. And this is an assertion with which most Americans, including the Supreme Court, at last check, disagree.

It shouldn't have surprised anyone to see a member of this Administration casually desert principle for the sake of career advancement. If there is one area in which President Bush has led by sterling example, it is in almost always consulting a nearby weather vane before taking a stand. (You will recall that Bush, like Sullivan, obtained his right-to-life credentials only to get a prominent job in a Republican Administration.) If anything, what is surprising is the Administration's seeming indifference, of late, to prevailing winds. In the case of fetal tissue research, and in several other cases, it is sticking to its anti-abortion guns even though the pro-choice movement, awakened by *Webster* v. *Reproductive Health Services*, looks increasingly formidable.

The explanation—surprise!—is a simple calculation of political costs and benefits. So far the Administration has kept the right-to-lifers happy without antagonizing its other major constituencies, by exploiting aspects of the abortion issue that few mainstream voters care about. Thus in November Bush vetoed a foreign aid appropriations bill because it contained money for the United Nations Population Fund, which supports population programs in China, where birth control policies are sometimes coercive. He did this, amazingly, even though the U.N. program in China subsidizes not abortions or sterilizations—voluntary or involuntary—but alternative means of contraception. But who really cares? Few American voters lose sleep over the population problem in China—or in Africa or South Asia or Latin America, which also would have gotten some of the U.S. contribution to the U.N. fund. So too with the Administration's recent refusal to approve Medicaid-funded abortions for women who are raped and its refusal to let the District of Columbia use *even its own tax revenues* to pay for abortions for poor women: in neither case are potential recipients of the assistance Bush blocked apt to vote Republican anyway. As for the right-to-life litmus test that is still being applied to aspiring upper-level health officials (and has stymied the search for a new director of the National Institutes of Health), how many voters even know what the NIH is?

Still, as the series of small anti-abortion victories grows, the collective political toll rises. Bush's awkward position on abortion for rape victims—they're entitled to one, unless they're too poor to pay for it—may draw the attention of some of the more socially conscious middle- and upper-middle-class voters. And the latest episode raises the stakes further. Most voters, Republican and Democrat, know someone who has Parkinson's disease, or Alzheimer's, or diabetes, and most of these voters are not categorically opposed to abortion. If they are aware of Sullivan's "decision" to radically and needlessly constrict the avenues through which a cure for these diseases is sought, they should be outraged. And if they aren't aware of it, the Democrats should get busy and call it to their attention.

DUSTOFF TO DUST

BISHOPS OPPOSE CONDOMS,
FAVOR PALESTINE HOMELAND
—*Los Angeles Times*, November 10

This was just about the only good news the Palestinians had as they approached the second anniversary of their *intifada*, which is Arabic for "dusting off." It was poor consolation. The U.S. Catholic bishops are even less

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influential in the Middle East than they are in the bedrooms of consenting adults. And their views on the disposition of the occupied territories are about as realistic as is their overwhelming vote of 219-4 for chastity as the only "morally correct and medically sure way" to prevent AIDS.

Writing in the December 8 *Washington Post*, Glenn Frankel vividly details the failures of the Palestinians in the territories. What most of those failures come down to is the inability of the indigenous insurgents to assert themselves against the Tunis PLO leadership as the representatives of the Palestinians in negotiations with the Israelis.

Not that the Israelis have made it particularly easy. They have, to be sure, modified their aim of completely quashing the *intifada*. But they have kept the cost to the locals of maintaining it, even at a less intense and less sustained level, extremely high, psychologically and financially. Nonetheless, they have kept Palestinian casualties—and their own—relatively low. One week shortly before the birthday of the rising the Israelis killed no Palestinians and the Palestinians killed no Israelis. An improvement in the situation. But seven Palestinians were killed by other Palestinians that week. This brings to just shy of 200 the number of Palestinians hacked to death or strung up on electric wires by their brothers, an auguring of what Palestinian independence might look like—not much different, one suspects, from Syrian or Iraqi independence.

The *intifada* will not force the Israelis out of the territories, certainly not on the terms that the so-called "moderate" Arabs imagine. Indeed, the strength of the Hamas Islamic fundamentalist movement in the territories (and in Jordan, too) reinforces a harder line among even dovish Israelis. A recent declaration of Hamas that it "remind[s] all that the Palestinian people have rejected the Partition Resolution and all the U.N. resolutions which laid the basis of the enemy state" is not an encouragement to the Israeli majority populace that actually wants to live without the territories. The equivocations on terrorism and on the legitimacy of Israel by the PLO itself, which some optimists thought were finally cleared up a year ago in Stockholm and Geneva, have also diminished the will to conciliatory experimentation on the Israeli (and diaspora Jewish) left. The fact is that Israel can live with the *intifada* more easily than the Palestinians can live with its consequences. But the facts for Israel remain very unpleasant nonetheless. They include a surprisingly high number of suicides by Israeli soldiers who didn't imagine that defending the Jewish state meant beating up Arab kids.

Moreover, there are bound to be some unpleasant dust-ups between Washington and Jerusalem. Given the unreliability of the various Arab partners, not least among them the Palestinians themselves, even someone as indifferent to Israel's security predicaments as James Baker is not likely to cast it permanently east of Eden. Accepting that there are always differences even between friends, the American commitment seems stable. The big change in Israel's diplomatic situation is in its renewed ties in the Third World, among the countries now liberating themselves from policies decided in Moscow, and for that matter with Moscow itself. Israel should not delude itself that the friendship of Hungary or Czechoslovakia will count for much when the really big stakes are decided. Nonetheless, to the extent that the government in Jerusalem feels less isolated in the world it might be more emboldened to take some risks in its own neighborhood.

But those who casually counsel such risks without sharing them should remember that if progress is made it will be made slowly, with many hesitations and halts. In these circumstances, the Bush Administration has been admirably dogged in pursuing the opportunity offered by the Shamir election initiative as a way of constructing a table around which Israelis and Palestinians may talk. Many around Yitzhak Shamir are being dragged into this process reluctantly, perhaps even Shamir himself. It's not yet clear whether any Palestinians at all have signed on even to the first step. Maybe the concurrence of President Mubarak of Egypt really is a sign of their concurrence. If it is, it's hard to resist remarking on how much this process actually looks like the Camp David Accords, which were put before the Palestinians more than a decade ago. Had they made use of Camp David's provisions, the Palestinians would have avoided shedding much Palestinian blood. It is still in the interests of Israel and the Palestinians to see what practical justice they can agree on in order to prevent death and enhance life.

CHINA CAD

It might have been explicable for President Bush to have sent a high-level delegation to Beijing to make nice with Deng Xiaoping if Deng were pledging to reverse his repressive course. It might have been explicable if Deng were pledging to cut off arms to his blood-drenched ally Pol Pot and force the genocidal Khmer Rouge into abandoning its campaign to retake power in Cambodia. It might have been explicable if Deng were pledging, personally and in public, to stop selling missiles to terrorist states.

No such pledges, of course, have been made. Yet Bush has moved in the most abject way to restore relations with the Chinese leadership—in effect, to treat the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4 as a misdemeanor requiring less than six months' probation. Bush got elected making much of the prison furlough of a convicted murderer. Now he is issuing a pardon to mass killers.

Why? Some critics suspect that Bush is in it for the money—that is, that Bush wants to protect the interests of Americans doing business in China, including members of his own family. We doubt it. China is a

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personal obsession of Bush's dating from his days as Washington's first envoy to the People's Republic. He's got it in his head that good relations with China are important, regardless of what the Chinese do and regardless of the strategic situation in the world. That might have been the case in the Nixon era, when U.S. links with a despotic China served as a counterweight to the Soviet-American rivalry. But this is the Gorbachev era, and relations with the Soviet Union are improving dramatically. There is no need for the United States to rush into renewed good relations with China.

On the contrary, there are many reasons not to rush. The most important is the implicit message that has now been sent to Mikhail Gorbachev. "If you want to crush, say, the Lithuanians, go ahead," Bush is signaling. "Congress and the press will scream a little and I'll have to frown, but the heat will be off before you know it." The message is that should Gorbachev decide he needs to kill masses of political demonstrators in order to save his skin or his empire, the United States has already given him a get-out-of-jail-free card.

The possibility that Gorbachev could resort to violence is not so remote. The Baltics are demanding independence, and other ethnic groups strive for the self-determination guaranteed them in the Soviet Constitution. *Perestroika* is not working. And now Gorbachev indicates he is unwilling to grant in his own country some of the most important liberties the Eastern Europeans have seized for themselves. He refused to let the Congress of Peoples Deputies hold a debate on the issue of abolishing the leading role of the Communist Party. He wants to keep the Baltics—and other suppressed peoples—chained to the Soviet Union. And he refuses to acknowledge a right of private property, even the self-evidently wise policy of allowing farmers to pass on tilling rights to their children.

In the long view, of course, it's astonishing that a Soviet legislature got to vote on the issue of debating the role of the Communist Party—and just as astonishing that 40 percent of the delegates voted "yes." The Soviet frontier, it seems, cannot keep out the ideas now sweeping Eastern Europe. In the first session of the Congress of Peoples Deputies, a year ago, only a handful of deputies even dared broach the subject. This time, too, the "leading role" was defended on the ground that the time was not yet ripe; almost no one spoke for it on its merits. (The only prominent exception was Dmitri Yazov, the defense minister—an exception that surely sends a shiver of fear through Gorbachev as well as his radical opponents.)

All this is progress, but it's not enough. Only private property will allow *perestroika* to deliver the goods. And only full political liberty will give the Soviet people confidence in their government. As things now stand, we must face the possibility that Gorbachev is traveling—certainly by a path different from Deng's—toward a Soviet Tiananmen Square. And with his China move, Bush has signaled to Gorbachev that the United States will understand. The government may, but the people won't.

In sending national security adviser Brent Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to China, Bush observed Chinese requirements for secrecy ahead of time and allowed his aides to be used for propaganda purposes by Deng and his cronies. "In both our societies," Scowcroft said blandly in his toast to the Chinese foreign minister, "there are voices of those who seek to redirect or frustrate our cooperation. We both must take bold measures to overcome these negative forces."

Scowcroft's "negative forces" include practically everybody in the United States. Except among people tied politically to Bush or economically to China, there is general and justified indignation at Bush's kowtowing to Deng. This issue represented a test of moral vision for Bush—an opportunity, at not very great cost, to demonstrate America's dedication to human rights and democracy. The people of the United States have demonstrated the right attitude—one of solidarity with China's courageous democrats. It might be said, perhaps, that in going against such overwhelming public sentiment Bush has at last displayed some leadership. But why did he have to save it for a shameful retreat from principle?

NOTEBOOK

THE GUN THAT COULDN'T SHOOT STRAIGHT: According to the weapons research and development center at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, the only thing wrong with the Army's new rifle is that soldiers have to fire it. "The M-16-A2 is the finest rifle in the world, but the accuracy of that weapon because of human factors is not as high as one would like it to be," public affairs officer Pete Rowland told the *New York Times*. Or, as the NRA might put it: Guns don't miss people. Only people miss people.

CONFLATION:

Influx of Refugees From East Expected To Ease Inflation

—*Wall Street Journal*, November 20, page C1

Influx From East to Spur Inflation

—same paper, same day, same story
(thanks to John Eberlein, Weston, Massachusetts)

FIVE CORRECTIONS: First, a typo in the December 18 Notebook turned what was supposed to have been a reference to "the massed armed forces of Syria" into "the masked armed forces" of same. (Unlike certain

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other Lebanese-based gunslingers, Syrian soldiers do not usually wear masks.) Second, the *Detroit Free Press* is owned by Knight-Ridder, not by Scripps-Howard, as asserted by TRB last week. Third, the fine print at the bottom of last week's table of contents page misstated the issue number as 25. It should have read: "Vol. 201, Number 26." Fourth, the headline on this item should be "Four Corrections."

LADIES' CHOICE:

Black Women Reluctant to Join Pro-Choice Forces

—*Los Angeles Times*, November 27, page A1

ABORTION: Blacks' Pro-Choice Role Increases

—same paper, same day, same story

GOLLY, ARE YOU SURE?:

Warsaw Pact Losing Its Edge, Sources Say

—*Washington Post*, December 2, page A21

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

GREEN THUMB

By Fred Barnes

On October 20 William K. Reilly, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, was rebuffed by the White House Domestic Policy Council. Reilly wanted to participate in a November meeting in Holland and announce that the United States would host a conference next year on global warming. No way, said the council (which consists of representatives of seven Cabinet departments, plus the EPA, the Office of Management and Budget, and White House aides). Not only that, but Reilly shouldn't even attend, council members said. His presence would only encourage others to show up. He'd legitimize a meeting of environmental dreamers who advocate overly stringent curbs on greenhouse gases, the source of global warming.

Reilly was chagrined but hardly immobilized. Four days later he and his wife went to the Kennedy Center with President Bush and the First Lady. They sat in the Presidential box to watch *A Few Good Men* starring Tom Hulce. As the two couples chatted, Reilly broached the subject of the meeting in Noordwijk, Netherlands, on November 6-7. Bush said he thought Reilly should attend. So Reilly went. He didn't get to invite the world to a conference in the United States, but he did officially endorse limits on greenhouse gas emissions. A month later at the Malta summit, Bush announced the international conference in the United States next year to draft a treaty on global climate change. "We've now wrapped it up in a big bear hug," Reilly says.

Reilly is as clever an inside operator as you'll find in the Bush Administration. That's surprising because his background is environmental (he headed a small think tank, the Conservation Foundation, for 17 years), not political. On issue after issue he's swayed Bush and gotten his way. But what makes Reilly unique in an Administration with relatively little infighting is the passionate feelings he generates, particularly when he raises the issue of global warming. Reilly, 49, has serious enemies.

One is Richard Darman, the budget director. He and Reilly clashed in policy debates over Bush's clean air bill last spring. Darman argued for less rigorous environmental regulations than the costly ones advocated by Reilly. Later Darman was enraged by accounts of their disagreement—faulty accounts, he thought—in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. He blamed Reilly, who'd taken notes at meetings, for leaking. Last August he wrote Reilly to say he'd no longer do any business with him. Darman skips White House meetings attended by Reilly.

On global warming, Darman's concerns are shared by other White House aides. They believe Reilly lacks the background in science, mathematics, or quantitative modeling to grasp the issue. "All of the predictions on global warming turn on theories of mathematics or modeling," says one official. "Reilly doesn't understand them." As a test, Darman once asked Reilly about "chaos theory." Reilly had never heard of it (John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, had). A more significant complaint involves policy. Darman, economic adviser Michael Boskin, and others think Reilly is pushing for economically ruinous restrictions to remedy an exaggerated problem.

Sununu is not a foe of Reilly's, but he has doubts about the projections of dire consequences from global warming. "We're in a situation where the rhetoric has gotten out front of the sciences," says a Sununu aide. "The more apocalyptic the forecast, the better." Sununu keeps up with scientific literature on global warming. D. Allan Bromley, Bush's science adviser, feeds him articles from science journals. One article circulated at the White House said that rather than a global temperature increase of nine degrees over the next 50 years, as some scientists have predicted, an increase of one degree over 30 years can be expected. Because projections vary so widely, Sununu says, "We're not ready to play the game of you-bet-the-world-economy. We're not ready to make big, big decisions."

Science advisers normally lack clout, but Bromley, a physicist from Yale, is a key figure in global warming policy. He got to know Bush when he served on Rea-

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gan's White House Science Council. In 1987 Bush traveled to Yale to dedicate Bromley's new laboratory. Like Sununu, Bromley wants to move on global warming, but slowly. He doesn't dispute the greenhouse effect (nor does Darman). "There is no major difference [among scientists] in the general contention that if we continue to put greenhouse gases in the air at the same rate we are now, we'll eventually experience global warming," he says. Bromley wants more data. He talks excitedly about the White House meeting next spring of scientific, environmental, and economic experts on climate change. The experts will "get to know each other" and "improve the analytic tools," Bromley says.

Until he accompanied Reilly to the Netherlands meeting, Bromley was assumed to be wary of Reilly. Bromley, after all, had presided over the DPC session at which Reilly was urged not to go to Holland. His opposition, Bromley now says, was based on fear that the Netherlands meeting would overshadow the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The United States is active in the panel's studies on global warming. Once it was clear the meeting wouldn't compete with the IPCC, Bromley became an enthusiast. At one point he called Sununu from Holland to chat about the resolution on stabilizing greenhouse gases. "If we did anything smart," says a Reilly aide, "it was inviting Dr. Bromley to Noordwijk. That's when his education began."

The anti-Reilly faction believes Bromley is now less skeptical about the threat of global warming. Bromley told the *Lost Angeles Times* that the White House shift—from balking at a proposal to host a treaty-writing conference on global warming to Bush's proposing just that at Malta—was based on fresh scientific knowledge. "We know a lot more now than we knew even a few months ago," he said. This drew laughs at the White House. "The only advance was in Bromley's education," says a White House official. "He's just getting up to speed." Whatever happened, Reilly sees Bromley as a budding ally.

Reilly's success is all the more amazing because he has so few allies, even counting Bromley. On global climate change, the only senior official to side with him is Secretary of State James Baker. This paid off at Malta. Robert Zoellick, a Baker aide, was one of the officials who drafted Bush's proposals for the summit. In White House talks about the Malta agenda, the environment was scarcely mentioned. But when the White House issued a list of 21 proposals that Bush made to Mikhail Gorbachev, two were Reilly-inspired: the conference next fall "to negotiate a framework treaty on global climate change," and the White House meeting next spring "to discuss global climate change issues." On hearing the news, an aided rushed to tell Reilly. He already knew. "I've been talking to Zoellick all along," he said.

In shaping Bush's environmental policy, Reilly is skillful in exploiting action-forcing events, mostly meetings. The administration doesn't want to be embarrassed at international gatherings. It needs a position, and Reilly offers one. Last winter Reilly grappled with the White House on CFCs, the chemicals that cause deterioration of the ozone layer. "The White House was determined to work the issue methodically through the Domestic Policy Council process," says a Reilly aide. Reilly insisted he should announce at a London conference in March that the United States would cut out CFC use entirely. Bush agreed. Absent the London meeting, the issue would probably still be under discussion.

In May Reilly was scheduled to attend a global warming conference in Geneva. Again, the administration needed a position. Reilly urged Bush to embrace the concept of negotiations for international rules to cope with climate change. Again, Bush agreed. In a statement, Bush backed "formal negotiations on the establishment of a framework convention on global climate." Sununu sent a cable to the American mission in Geneva. "We should seek to develop full international consensus on necessary steps to prepare for a formal treaty negotiating process," he said. Then there was Noordwijk, for which Reilly got the commitment to restrict greenhouse gas emissions. And finally Malta, at which the plan to host a treaty conference was unveiled.

Smooth as Reilly is, there's a soft spot in his performance. He gets too much credit, Bush too little. Bush really wants to be known as the "environmental President." Instead, he's known as the President with an ardent environmentalist at the EPA. That's not the same. One reason the DPC blocked Reilly's bid to announce the U.S. role as conference host next year was that officials wanted Bush to announce it. He did, but Reilly got more coverage for having been rebuffed. "That's symptomatic of Reilly's biggest problem: he's obsessed with p.r.," says a Bush aide. Good press is fine. If it comes at the President's expense, it's mighty risky. •

East Germans get some payback.

MARXED MEN

By Robert Darnton

BERLIN

Can East Germany find a "third way" between capitalism and socialism? The question was laid squarely on the table at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin, and around it gathered a group of social scientists, the first East-West meeting of its kind since the opening of the Wall on November 9, and probably the first since the Wall went up 28 years ago. The chairman introduced the East Berliners as members of "what I believe

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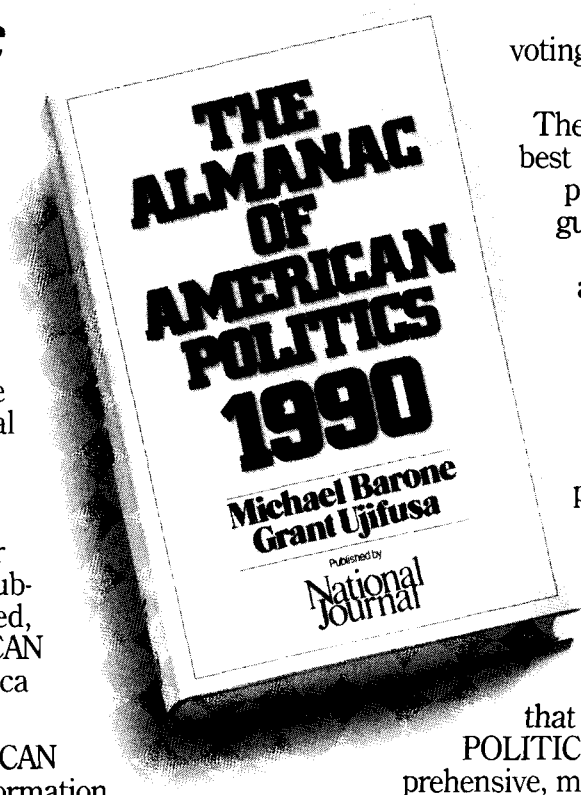

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AL31

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is still called the Marxist-Leninist Institute for Sociology"—a joke, meant to break the ice. "As a matter of fact, we dropped the Marxist-Leninist part a few weeks ago," came the reply from the senior Eastern sociologist.

The ice was broken. Then an economics professor from West Berlin tossed out a provocative statement. There is no third way, he said. You can have a planned economy or a market economy, but mixtures will not work. They become mired in bureaucratic intervention and can't cope with the flow of information in the computer age, to say nothing of the problem of matching supply and demand. Not so, said a young East Berliner. Socialism is like Christianity; it has never really been tried. East Germans did not practice socialism; the GDR already had a mixed economy—the Schalck System. That brought a laugh. The Easterner was alluding to the scandal that finally forced the entire Politburo of the GDR, including General Secretary Egon Krenz, to resign on December 3: the revelation that Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, the secretary of state for foreign trade, had been using public money to run a private business in the arms trade. Schalck-Golodkowski fled the country. Top members of the Communist Party were put under house arrest. And East German television, which used to be a joke and now is an addiction for millions of Germans on both sides of the borders, flooded the GDR with images of high living by the highest leaders of the Party.

A special assembly was called on December 8 to reconstitute the Party and to select a new set of leaders, but will anyone follow? The moral bonds that once attached the Party to the people have snapped. There has been a revolution.

"Revolution" was the term applied by the East Berliners at the institute to events of the past couple of weeks. They described the earlier explosion of November 4 to 9 as a pre-revolution, or *Vormärz*, an allusion to the Central European eruptions of 1848, the parallel most frequently cited in these parts. First the bleeding of the population from emigration by means of Prague and Warsaw, then the Leipzig demonstrations, then Gorbachev's visit and the near-miss of a Tiananmen Square massacre in Berlin, then the climactic rally of November 4, the fall of Honecker, and the "fall" on November 9 of the Wall: it was a spectacular sequence of events. But the real shift of power took place the following month, when the Party declared itself bankrupt and the first apparatchiks went to jail.

This view of events gave some urgency to the next point on the agenda: If the Communist Party has really lost its grip on power, what is the future of socialism in the GDR? Socialism has no future, said the economist from the West. Why not? replied a young sociologist from the East. We can keep our medical service, our social security, our protection against unemployment; and at the same time we can allow limited investment from the Bundesrepublik, taxing profits to pay for the social services. There are many possibilities advocated by many people in the Party's rank and file: feminism, ecology, a breakup of the state into self-governing communes.

The West Berlin professors looked a little startled at this prospect, which summoned up the radicalism on their own campuses rather than a notion of a viable economy. Mixed systems don't work, insisted the economist. Socialism is retreating before Thatcherism everywhere, even in France. "Planification" is an illusion, even in Sweden. We have whole libraries of books on the subject and decades of experience with experiments. In the end, if you open the door to West German capitalists, you will go capitalist.

The problem is time, said a Western historian. The youngest and most skilled East Germans are pouring out of the country at a rate of between one and two thousand a day. Instead of stopping the hemorrhage, the opening of the Wall has compounded it by undermining the economy. East Germans can now sell their cheap, subsidized goods in West Germany for Western deutsche marks and then use the strong currency to finance further rounds of speculation. The GDR is being bled white, and no one is capable of saving the situation, because no one is in charge.

The GDR will be West Germany's *mezzogiorno* (southern Italy), said a sociologist from West Berlin. Labor and wealth will migrate to the Bundesrepublik, and the GDR will remain as a tourist attraction or an economic colony, if it retains any independence at all. The utopian moment has come and gone. It lasted about a week, from November 4 to 12. It was a carnival, a time of dancing on the Wall, pouring champagne over border guards, and collective *Bruderschaft* (fraternal unity). Now the party's over.

An older sociologist from East Berlin came to the same conclusion. "I love the GDR," he said sadly. "I was born here in Berlin. My house was bombed by the Americans. I was raised in a good Communist family, and I believe in socialism. But I think the GDR is finished. It was a historical phase, an episode."

What the ordinary people in East Germany are thinking right now is difficult to say. A month ago they spoke out loud and strong in demonstration after demonstration, always with the same refrain: "We are the people! We are staying here!" Almost no one called for reunification, a subject that was left to right-wing politicians in the West. But since then, more than ten million East Germans, 55 percent of the population, have visited West Germany, and reunification is being debated openly. New Forum, the main opposition group, has called for a referendum on the issue.

Something that sounds like nationalism seems to be swelling in the streets. A leader of the Lutheran opposition complained recently of having been awakened by a group of drunks singing the pre-war national anthem under his window. They sang its first verse, the one that is informally forbidden in West Germany today and that not only proclaims "*Deutschland über alles*," but also celebrates a Grossdeutschland, one that stretches far beyond the Oder-Neisse line, "*von der Maas bis an die*

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Memel / von der Etsch bis an den Belt" ("from the Maas to the Memel, from the Adige to the Belt," i.e., a Germany that would extend into territory that now lies in Belgium, the U.S.S.R., Italy, and Denmark).

What one sees on East German television and hears in East Berlin streets is, above all, anger. People are outraged that the leaders of the Party, who have constantly called for sacrifices in the name of the general welfare, should have embezzled funds for ski lodges and vacation villas. The fury may seem odd to Americans, who are accustomed to Presidents flying off to pleasure palaces on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. But the sight of a few Volvos parked in front of some rather dumpy hunting lodges—all purchased with public money—brings an East German's blood to a boil.

The scandals burst before the public during a spectacular session of the GDR parliament, which was televised live on December 1. Word spread about the flight of Schalck-Golodkowski, the arrest of the Party's best-known leaders, and fabulous sums—a hundred billion marks (about $5 billion, by current unofficial exchange rates), according to a common account—stashed away in Swiss banks. The television cameras picked up the shock waves rippling through the House—the jaws dropping, the heads shaking, the tears welling up in eyes. Krenz tried to save the situation with some desperate oratory; but after invoking Gorbachev and openness, he undid himself by insisting too much on his own lack of a hunting lodge. Two days later he was shouted down by an angry demonstration in front of Party headquarters and forced to resign.

Since then, more extravagant rumors have spread—a symptom of a revolutionary situation spinning out of control. East Berliners passed the word that a plane full of compromising documents was about to take off for Bucharest, the only fit place for the Party archives, and that airport workers refused to fill the plane's fuel tank. The secret police are said to be destroying files in order to save themselves and their former bosses from the new investigating commission. Crowds marched on police offices, demanding to be shown the files. Government officials warn against disorder in the streets, while "citizens' committees" have sprung up in several cities to preserve the peace—and the documentation.

Meanwhile, Erich Honecker, once the supreme head of Party and state, the man who only a month ago stood beside Gorbachev to celebrate 40 years of socialist rule, faces charges of having damaged the economy and enriched himself through criminal abuse of public office. Poor Honecker. Once the merciless eye of the television camera had lingered over the furniture in his hunting lodge, his spotless record of opposition to Nazism seemed to be forgotten. The folklore of corruption, the images of private wealth and public poverty, the stabs in the back and the antlers on the wall, are undoing the power structure of an old regime. The hunting lodges have doomed the Communists in the GDR just as Imelda Marcos's shoe collection delegitimized the dictatorship in the Philippines and Marie Antoinette's diamond necklace brought down the monarchy in France. Now Honecker, the former monarch of a docile GDR, sits in house arrest, helpless and reviled, a captive to a revolution, like Louis XVI in the Tuileries.

ROBERT DARNTON, professor of history at Princeton University, is spending the year as a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin.

Will Cheney slice or get sliced?

CHOPPING SPREE

By Morton Kondracke

For a while there, it looked as though it was going to be a good show. The Washington media and the think tank observer corps were savoring the prospect of a battle royal inside the Bush Administration, matching two of its smartest, most experienced bureaucratic players: budget director Dick Darman vs. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney over the fiscal 1991 defense budget, to be presented to Congress on January 22.

But the fight turned out to be more gentlemanly than gladiatorial. The two men did disagree—on the shape of the world and on how much to cut. Darman thinks that the Warsaw Pact threat to Europe has "disappeared" because Eastern European countries wouldn't join the Soviet Union in an attack on Western Europe or even let the Soviet army cross their territory for one. Cheney believes the threat will be "significantly reduced" only when the Soviets pull out 300,000 troops from Eastern Europe in accordance with conventional force negotiations now under way in Vienna. Even then, he says, they will still have the biggest military in the world and will still pose a strategic threat to the United States.

So whereas Bush last March had set a goal of $301.2 billion in 1991 outlays, a one percent increase over his request for this year, Cheney was willing to go down to $297 billion in the interests of presenting Congress a "realistic" budget that would not be shredded on arrival by legislators eager to cash in on a post-cold war "peace dividend." Darman wanted $290 billion, a cut of 7.7 percent below the Bush projection, including losses to inflation, and three percent in real terms below the $287.1 billion Congress approved for this year. Darman wanted no peace dividend, but money to lower the budget deficit without a tax increase.

In the classic budget wars of the Reagan Administration, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and budget director David Stockman dueled with press leaks, phony charts, and private whispers into the President's

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good ear. Weinberger won one famous victory by showing Reagan pictures of an unarmed pygmy labeled "Carter budget," a four-eyed nerd carrying an old rifle labeled "Stockman budget" ($1.3 trillion over five years), and a robust GI Joe with an M-16 representing the Weinberger proposal of $1.5 trillion.

There was some chart-play this year, too, as Darman and Cheney pleaded their cases to Bush in five or six hours of meetings in late November and early December. "The way to fight Darman is to outpaper him," said one participant. "Darman always walks into a meeting with piles of paper to pass out so everyone is talking from his agenda." Cheney beat him to it by distributing a graph showing that the defense budget had declined by 13 percent since 1985, and that Darman's proposal would amount to a precipitate drop. The next day Darman showed up with a graph tracing the budget since 1945, on which his cuts represented a tiny jiggle. The meeting broke up in laughter.

In contrast to the Reagan years, practically nothing leaked from the Bush deliberations. Ten days before Bush made his decision, Cheney scrubbed his request down to $294.3 billion, while Darman held at $290. Bush ultimately split the difference at $292.15 billion, about two percent below fiscal 1990 outlays. Cheney and Darman stayed friends and said they'd been through a "fascinating intellectual exercise" planning the future of defense spending in the Gorbachev era.

But there's trouble ahead, especially for Cheney. Though budget deliberations stayed secret while in progress, Pentagon planning documents were leaked—including one indicating that between 1992 and '94 the armed services might have to cut $180 billion from their previous spending plans. Also leaked were intelligence estimates that Soviet military spending would decline. The leaks, and Cheney's attempts to explain them, have sown confusion and aroused intense criticism from Congress and from Europeans.

Exceptionally withering was an assault from Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who charged in a breakfast meeting with reporters and in a December 7 speech to the National Security Industrial Association that Cheney had "fumbled big time" by failing to build a strategic rationale for his budget in speeches and briefings. Now, he said, the budget is in "political free fall" and liable to fall victim to a slashing frenzy on Capitol Hill next year.

According to Aspin, the $180 billion reduction is not really dramatic (actually it represents a 20 percent cut from a $900 billion base), but the talk about it has led uninitiated people to think that next year's defense budget will be just $120 billion and that $180 billion will be freed up for deficit reduction and domestic spending. (Better-initiated liberal congressmen, led by Representative Barney Frank, have proposed pulling 100,000 U.S. troops out of Europe, eliminating four of the nation's 14 aircraft carrier battle groups, and canceling the B-2 bomber and the Trident and MX missiles, among other programs, to lower defense outlays by $15 billion in 1991, to $272 billion, and by $72 billion over three years, down to $205 billion. A more sophisticated group at the Brookings Institution, led by former Pentagon official William Kaufmann, has proposed a somewhat less drastic program that would whack the budget down to $265 billion by 1994. And former Pentagon officials Lawrence Korb and Robert McNamara propose cutting $15 billion per year for ten years, down to about $150 billion.)

Without a carefully articulated military plan, says Aspin, "you'll get a pork strategy" both from the armed services and from Congress, which will fashion budgets to suit their parochial interests. Aspin said of Cheney, "Here is one guy you thought had been around long enough to know how the system works, but he's bungled badly." In return, Administration officials say that Aspin is grandstanding in advance of Bush's budget announcement in order to bolster a weak position on his own committee, whose members want to protect pet programs, and in the House as a whole, which wants to slash defense totals while keeping open unneeded local military bases. Last year Aspin backed Cheney's efforts to eliminate bases, the F-14 fighter, and the V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor plane, but could not carry his committee or the Democratic House. "Aspin's was the weakest of any performance in the national defense area in 1989," one official said. "Politically, it's simply impossible for him to say anything nice about us."

But Aspin isn't the only one criticizing Cheney. Senator Sam Nunn also has said that the Administration has failed to take adequate account of the Gorbachev phenomenon and is basing its budget planning mainly on fiscal priorities, notably Bush's passion not to raise taxes. Yet when Cheney recently began to drop his skepticism about Gorbachev and said in interviews that the defense budget could decrease because the threat of war was reduced, he was assailed by European defense experts. François Heisbourg of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, said: "The Europeans had been told by the Americans, 'Don't make unilateral cuts. Wait for the outcome of negotiations with the Russians.' And they've done that. Now suddenly you have this man Cheney popping up and saying that the Soviets are going away. If he'd just said, 'We've got a budget problem,' everyone would've understood. By downplaying the Soviet threat without warning, he's kicked the bottom out of European defense budgets."

There are other gripes. Conservatives say (and Aspin, of all people, agrees) that Cheney should have done "a Weinberger" and refused to propose cuts himself, the better to bargain with Congress. Nunn and the press are accusing him, in effect, of hiding intelligence reports on expected Soviet defense reductions. And even some Administration officials agree that he surprised the allies and hasn't developed a coherent strategy to defend his budget. One high-level official went so far as to say that the Pentagon might not be up to planning its own spending priorities, and that Darman and his staff might

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have to take over. If that happens there will be a fight.

But Cheney seems unfazed by the criticism. It's of a piece with his personality and his life's experience: he always seems self-contained and at ease. Reserved almost to the point of reclusiveness (say some former Congressional colleagues who can't figure him out), he has nevertheless always been president of his class or captain of his team—in school in Wyoming, as chief of staff in the Ford White House, and as the No. 2 House Republican leader in Congress. He is one of the most highly esteemed of Washington officials, but he's no gladhander. He wins respect by observing keenly, speaking softly, inventing shrewd stratagems, and sticking to his guns. He's a deep reader of history, especially military history (an almost-Ph.D.), and an expert in intelligence and politics.

Cheney does slap hard when he wants to make a point. When Jim Wright scheduled two legislative days in one 24-hour period to push through a funding package, Cheney called him, in public, a "heavy-handed son of a bitch." Cheney inspired the Iran-*contra* minority report that accused Democrats of waging "ongoing guerrilla warfare" against the Reagan Administration and of reaching "hysterical conclusions" rather than conducting an objective analysis. In a curious lapse of good sense, Cheney's report found that "there was no constitutional crisis, no systematic disrespect for the rule of law, no grand conspiracy, and no Administration-wide dishonesty or cover-up" in Iranamok, just "mistakes in judgment."

Cheney gets high marks from Democrats such as Nunn, though, for quickly taking charge of the Pentagon after former Senator John Tower's nomination was defeated and for producing a new budget, with unprecedented weapons cuts, just 39 days after being sworn in. Cheney did not get all he wanted out of Congress last year, but won most of it, including a phase-out of the F-14 and research funds only for the V-22. He wanted and got funding for the B-2, the rail-mobile MX, and the Midgetman missile, though not as much as he sought for Star Wars. When Bush was casting about for a major initiative to unveil at the NATO summit in Brussels this summer, it was Cheney who suggested a speed-up of conventional arms talks in Europe and, with former Joint Chiefs chairman William Crowe, worked out a formula whereby the United States would withdraw 30,000 troops from Europe while the Soviet Union would pull back 300,000.

Now Cheney insists that he does have a strategy for defending America and that the budget is not in "free fall," but he argues that the time to unveil his plan is after the President's budget announcement in January. Nonetheless, he said in an interview, some principles on which he's operating include the following: He is determined to cut the budget by cutting bases, divisions, personnel, and current weapons systems, but not advanced technology, as Kaufmann proposes, or pay and training for troops (operations and maintenance), as Aspin recommends. He says he wants a smaller and more capable force in the future, not the ill-paid, semitrained "hollow army" the United States had in the 1970s. He has not determined the exact 1991 program mix, but it will call for spending authority of about $295 billion and will require eliminating $22 billion worth of programs that the military services had planned to have.

He asserts that the Soviet Union "is not about to give up its military superpower status" and will be armed with modern, mobile SS-24 and SS-25 missiles, a new model SS-18 heavy missile, two new classes of missile submarine, an upgraded air defense, and two bomber systems even after a START agreement is reached. Cheney wants a modern strategic force too, including a rail-mobile MX, SDI, and the B-2 bomber.

If a Conventional Forces in Europe agreement is reached with the Soviets next year, he says, Gorbachev seems to be planning to retain a "smaller, but highly capable conventional force" that the United States will try to reduce even further with follow-up negotiations. Responding to European critics, he claims he always contended that the United States would keep troops in Europe and would not abandon NATO, but that it is simple reality that the Soviet threat is diminishing. He says that the United States has borne 62 percent of the cost of defending Europe, and that the Europeans should carry more of the burden. Cheney also denies any attempt to conceal intelligence on Soviet defense reductions. In fact, Pentagon aides say, there were no actual reductions until this year.

Even though it soon may not be necessary to prepare for a heavy-tank land war in Europe, Cheney says, the United States will want to project power to Third World regions, guard the sea lanes, fight terrorism and the drug trade, protect the Persian Gulf, and be prepared to reinforce NATO in the event of a reversal of Soviet policy. He believes a strong Navy will be more important than ever.

And Cheney plans to challenge Congress by recommending new domestic base closings and the shutdown of some additional weapons system production lines, which will mean employment disruptions, while arguing against drastic troop withdrawals from overseas or cancellation of strategic weapons programs. "The challenge this time is to fend off those in Congress who want to substitute pork for military capability," he said.

Cheney's admirers say that he has taken on one of the least enviable jobs in government: imposing major cuts and administrative reform on bureaucracies steeped in self-importance and wasteful habits. And, they say, he is trying to do so in an orderly fashion while the world is changing faster than officials can keep up with it and when politicians are eager for quick savings. The illustrious defense chiefs of the past—Stimson, Forrestal, Marshall, McNamara, Laird, Schlesinger, and Brown—for the most part presided over major buildups to fight wars or meet mounting Soviet challenges. To build down prudently and efficiently will require perhaps greater management and strategic skills and political acumen. Does Cheney have what it takes? I bet he does. •

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Aquino's daily struggle for survival.

COUP DU JOUR

By Alan Berlow

A week before the latest coup attempt in the Philippines, my wife and I had dinner with one of the plotters of the 1986 rebellion that toppled the Marcos dictatorship and put Corazon Aquino in office. Our friend, a close associate of Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, the charismatic leader of a nearly successful putsch in August 1987 and a key player in the most recent revolt, reminisced about anti-Aquino plots he has known. He talked about what went wrong and what it would take for one to succeed. When I inquired about Colonel Honasan—who has been in hiding since he escaped from a prison ship last year, taking with him all of his guards—my friend asked me if I knew about "Honasan Inc." Honasan Inc., he explained, is a shorthand way of describing how a select group of wealthy Filipino politicians and businessmen has been investing, or as he put it, "buying stock," in Honasan's coup attempts, so as to secure a place for themselves in case the next one works.

Whether or not there really is a Honasan Inc., its existence is not implausible. Manila is a city where coup rumors percolate incessantly and where military officers seem to have nothing better to do than to plot the downfall of a legally constituted, democratically elected government. As we left the restaurant my friend remarked, "You know, someone just called me this morning and asked if I would participate in a coup. I have to tell you I found the offer quite tempting." He said he declined the invitation and decided to "play it safe for now." Then he added, "Maybe some other time."

Aquino has survived six attempted coups, and no one in the armed forces will say that there won't be another one. "It would be like me assuring my wife I would never drink beer again," Brig. Gen. Oscar Florendo, the Philippine Armed Forces spokesman, told reporters in Manila. The latest rebellion was not only the bloodiest. It was also the best organized, attracted the broadest base within the military, and came closer to succeeding than any of the others.

To an outsider the rebellion seemed to present Filipinos with a choice between an inchoate and admittedly flawed democracy and a return to dictatorship. As with the preceding rebellions, the rebels left no doubt that they hoped to depose Aquino. They aired familiar grievances about corruption in the armed forces and the government (in particular on the part of the president's family), and about the inefficiency of the bureaucracy and the conduct of the war against the ongoing Communist insurgency. But the rebels were less clear about what kind of government they hoped to see installed. They did not even suggest the outline of an agenda should their coup succeed. Honasan issued one statement indicating that the rebels hoped to establish a "nationalist reformist government," whatever that is.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that within the armed forces almost any crackpot group could stage a revolt and be confident that most military men would simply watch events unfold and fall in line behind the winner. But the military's contempt for democracy and civilian government is in many ways less striking than the ambivalence of the population at large. Although Filipinos are generally proud of the largely peaceful "People Power" revolt that replaced the Marcos dictatorship, few express outrage when their incipient democracy is threatened.

Even Aquino has been slow to see what is at stake. "Treason" does not seem to be part of her vocabulary. Still, she has some sense of the problem. "Filipino people came from a dictatorship and went to a democracy," she recently told foreign correspondents in Manila. "What people would like is to get the best of both worlds." The widespread indifference of her countrymen may have something to do with the fact that the Philippines—until 1946 a U.S. colony and for 20 years under the corrupt rule of Ferdinand Marcos—has had only limited experience with democracy. It may also have something to do with the fact that Aquino has been unable to make her democratic institutions improve the economic status of the vast majority of her countrymen.

Short of being thrown out of office, it is hard to imagine anything more devastating to Aquino than this latest rebellion, which involved some 3,000 members of her armed forces. The week-long siege of the city's financial district, the reports of crowds cheering as planes bombed the presidential palace, and the pictures of rebel troops shouting "Time out" as they swaggered back to their barracks, weapons in hand, do not create a picture of a president firmly in control. Repeated state-

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ments by Aquino and other senior officials that the coup had been crushed—issued to the background noise of rifle and rocket fire in the heart of the capital—did little to boost the credibility of her government.

Perhaps most damaging was Aquino's decision to call on the Bush Administration for military help. This may have saved her government, but the use of U.S. fighter planes was viewed by many Filipinos as direct foreign intervention in a domestic squabble. The Administration's orgy of self-congratulation for rescuing democracy in the Philippines only made matters worse, rubbing salt in the wounds of the country's growing nationalist sector. Aquino's critics say she will now be more beholden to the United States, and more likely to extend the lease on U.S. air and naval bases in the country.

If Aquino survives, her ability to govern will be drastically curtailed. She is surrounded by a divided and largely hostile military and by political opponents who are often vicious, destructive, and unscrupulous. Her own vice president, Salvador Laurel, is only the most egregious case in point. Laurel, who consistently rates among the country's least popular public figures, has repeatedly called on Aquino to resign. Last week he characterized the rebels as "reformists," described their revolt as a display of "democracy in its fullest and complete sense," and offered to serve in a military junta "if it was for the good of the country."

CORY AQUINO BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But Aquino's problems are also of her own making. "She is like a derelict satellite in aimless orbit," says Tony Gatmaitan, a Filipino businessman and political columnist who was once an active Aquino supporter. "It is only a question of time before political gravity edges up on her and she comes to a fiery crash." Edgar Maranan, a political scientist at the University of the Philippines, recently described Aquino's administration as "the joint rule of the well-meaning, the inept, the brutal, and the corrupt."

Aquino deservedly claims credit for restoring democratic institutions—a legislature, courts, free elections, and a free press. Unquestionably the Philippine economy has made some progress. Last year it achieved the highest rate of growth in more than a decade. Aquino has destroyed monopolies created by Marcos and eliminated many trade barriers. But for the average Filipino peasant, life under Aquino is little different than it was under Marcos. There may be a condominium boom in Manila, but in the provinces most people are living in grass huts without electricity and running water, and many are hungry. Aquino seems unable to address the problems of these people. Hers is in many ways a squandered presidency, which has eschewed confrontation, avoided risks, and missed opportunities.

She bemoans the ravaging of the country's forests—which has caused massive flooding of ricelands and the destruction of fisheries—but illegal logging continues unabated. Manila residents have complained for years about the lack of basic services such as garbage collection. For the last two months they have been plagued with power outages for up to six hours a day, resulting in millions of dollars of lost revenue. But the government does not even advise businesses when these outages will take place. Aquino's own "solutions" frequently seem ill-considered and naive at best. Asked in October about rampant illegal gambling, Aquino replied: "If the people will not engage in illegal gambling, then we will not have this problem." A devout Catholic, she follows the Church's lead on population issues and therefore has no program. Meanwhile, the population grows at a rate that effectively neutralizes the modest gains in per capita income.

Aquino used to insist that agrarian reform would be the cornerstone of her economic recovery program. But then she handed the problem over to her landlord-dominated Congress, which approved a law that allows the country's wealthiest landowners (such as Aquino and her family) to give peasant farmers shares of stock in plantations where they work instead of land. Many of these farmers are little more than indentured servants

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working for a dollar or two a day who will now have a probably worthless piece of paper proclaiming them "property owners."

Aquino's advisers are saying that she now must act more decisively and effectively, that she must be willing to break some heads. This is not her style. She has escalated her rhetoric in recent days and is reportedly preparing a new drive against corruption and a new effort to provide public services. But even if she wanted to make serious changes, it is probably too late. Her credibility and influence are at an all-time low.

One might expect Aquino to demand courts-martial and prison terms for the leaders of the coup (there is no death penalty), but severe punishment seems implausible. Soldiers involved in the July 1986 revolt literally were made to do 50 push-ups. "This time," one officer told me, "they will be made to do sit-ups." Although several officers who participated in the coup of August 1987 were convicted and sentenced to jail, most escaped during the recent mutiny. Armed Forces spokesman Florendo indicated that most of the leaders of this coup escaped arrest. No doubt they are busy planning their next adventure.

And though Aquino needs to demonstrate her mettle, her most loyal commanders, such as Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos, came close to losing their jobs, if not their lives, in the recent coup. They will probably advise her to mend the deep splits within the military rather than to seek retribution. Loyalists like Ramos—a highly popular figure who is expected to run for president in 1992—were seriously bothered by this insurrection and are now undoubtedly looking after their own hides.

On the economic front, the problems are no less daunting. What little momentum Aquino had achieved is likely to be slowed by the recent violence. Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana has described the coup as "a disaster for economic development." Although companies already invested in the Philippines aren't likely to pull out, new companies may think twice. As Gatmaitan told me, "There are other places in Asia where companies can invest. It is not as if we're a Garden of Eden." William Belchere, an economic forecaster, predicts that economic growth will slow significantly. "The Philippines will be perceived as a land of coups and unstable government . . . and there is nothing, absolutely nothing, she can do about it."

In the wake of the coup, Aquino has already organized one massive political rally in support of her government, and she has got the right idea in going directly to the people. Her decision to speak at the rally in Tagalog rather than in English was about four years overdue. Although educated Filipinos pride themselves on their use of English, the vast majority of people don't understand it. Now she must get beyond the macroeconomics and the rhetoric about democracy and offer people—especially in the rural areas where most of them live—simple, workable self-help programs that can yield short-term results. In a country where millions go to bed hungry, this wealthy aristocrat might take a lesson in the benefits of backyard gardening.

During a recent visit to the island of Samar I was taken on a tour of one small village by Mayor Emiliana Villacarillo. "This road cost a million pesos [about $45,000]," she said, pointing to a narrow dirt footpath overgrown with weeds. "But only 40 percent [of the money] was actually spent here." She explained that the contractor had taken a share of the original project and transferred it to a subcontractor who paid off a government auditor in Manila to certify that the "road" was completed. We then waded across the Jincontol River in water up to our waists. Midstream, Villacarillo pointed to the sky and said the government had spent 80,000 pesos to construct a "hanging bridge" across the river. But it too was never built. The locals refer to it as the "*hagin*" bridge, the "bridge of wind." Aquino should investigate a few of these rip-offs and demonstrate that she won't tolerate them.

Aquino must also be willing to take some risks. She can start at Hacienda Luisita, her family's massive 15,000-acre sugar plantation. She should demand that her family tear up its idiotic stock certificates and redistribute land to the tillers. If she can implement land reform on her own plantation, she can then try a second demonstration project on the island of Negros, where a handful of wealthy landowners controls virtually all of the land. The military has complained bitterly about her failure to implement programs in areas like Negros where the Communist insurgency is strongest. Aquino should tell her military that if it wants to end the insurgency on Negros, it can help her implement a serious land redistribution program. Perhaps she can't afford to antagonize all of the country's landlords, but she should be willing to take on a few.

As for the complaints about corruption, Aquino should target a handful of the most egregious abusers. She named her own cousin, Edward "Danding" Conjuangco, as one of the backers of the latest coup. Danding is in the country illegally, he has graft charges hanging over his head, and he is running free. Yet Aquino has not even demanded his arrest. She should incarcerate him and insist that he be tried. Similarly, she accuses Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, who served as defense minister under her government as well as Marcos's, of backing the coup. Enrile also has been accused of amassing tens of millions of dollars illegally under Marcos. Why not investigate him?

Since taking office Aquino has been surrounded by people who have told her why she can't do this or that. She can't get a better deal on debt repayment, which drains off 40 percent of the country's foreign and domestic earnings, because the international bankers will be unhappy. She can't stop illegal logging or implement land reform because she will anger powerful people who are in cahoots with the military. If she threatens them, they will overthrow her. Yet she doesn't threaten them and they have given her barely a moment's peace. Until now Aquino's main mission has been to survive in office. It's not enough. Her people want more. •

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MAGGIE'S FLYING CIRCUS

By Henry Fairlie

They called in, agog, from Florida to New Brunswick. They were the viewers who had just watched C-SPAN's third live broadcast from the British House of Commons. They found it "Absolutely superb. . . . Fascinating. . . ." Perhaps predictably, they were amazed at "elected representatives speaking so beautifully," at the "perfect English spoken," even impromptu. They had enjoyed the "cut and thrust," which made the Commons "a real democracy—much more than our House of Representatives." Most striking of all, they said that they felt involved in the proceedings.

Who could have expected that American viewers would become so engaged in a full dress debate or Question Time in the legislature of another nation? If they found it "most educational," it was also in another way. In the wasteland of network programming, we have almost forgotten television's potential. No other medium could bring out so clearly the now universal nature of almost every major political and social issue. It was like watching the parliament of the global village.

So what did the viewers see? After 20 years of debates over the proposal, the televising of the Commons began, as a six-month experiment, on Tuesday, November 21, the day of the annual state opening of the new session of Parliament by the queen. This ceremony starts at 10:30 a.m., London time, when Black Rod (properly the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, so called because of his staff of office, a black wand surmounted by a gold lion) appears at the Bar of the House of Commons to summon its members to the House of Lords.

Once the Commons are squeezed into the Lords, the queen enters, robed and crowned, and takes her seat on the throne, from which she reads the Queen's Speech, although she had no hand in its composition. It is written by the government, and announces its program and priorities for the new legislative session. In her long reign, as Labour and Conservative governments have succeeded each other, the queen has both urged the nationalization of basic industries, and called for their denationalization. The crown never wobbles. This year, as her prime minister tries to steal the more attractive clothes of the opposition, Her Majesty emerged as a strong advocate for the environment and something called "the quality of life."

The Commons then dispersed, to reconvene in its own chamber at the usual hour of 2:30 p.m. On this opening day, the Speaker first reads the Standing Orders of the House, including the historic injunction to the commissioner of the Metropolitan Police to ensure that members can pass without let or hindrance to and from their House. This is a pure formality, although once the rights had to be wrested from the crown. After each Order is read, there is a rumble of assent, and the Speaker intones, "The ayes have it. The ayes have it." But this year a Labour backbencher chose to interrupt the Speaker, saying that the right of unimpeded passage should also be guaranteed to every citizen. The Speaker gazed at him with pitying scorn. It was, another member said later, the first indication of how some MPs might try to use the cameras to gain publicity outside the House.

A Conservative backbencher then moved the loyal address, thanking Her Majesty for her gracious speech. This form may have seemed servile to Americans, but it is, of course, only a motion of confidence in the government's program. Sir Ian Gow, the mover, sits for the resort of Eastbourne, populated by sedate retired people, and for only four of its 104 years' existence as a constituency has it not been represented by a Conservative. You can't find a safer seat. He did not address himself much to the government's program. His speech was a knockabout turn, full of in-jokes and parochial allusions, relished by members as if they were schoolboys back from the summer vacation.

Americans must have been mystified by most of this, but they may have appreciated his reference to a letter sent to members by an agency that promised, for a fee, to groom them for the cameras. The image they projected, it advised, would depend 50 percent on appearance (chortles); 38 percent on body language (laughter); and only seven percent on "what you say" (guffaws). But confidence was expressed that members "won't look like American anchormen." Anyone could enjoy that.

During these preliminaries, Americans had their first chance to contemplate the august, robed figure of the Speaker, his thickly plaited wig (oppressive in a warm chamber) flapping about his jowls. He is not a party leader like Tom Foley. When a new Speaker is needed, the government (in consultation with the opposition) nominates a member from its own benches, and he

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remains Speaker until he retires or dies, even if the opposition is returned to power. Once elected, he strips himself of all partisan associations, not even eating with other members in the Commons dining room, and when he retires, does not resume political activity. Americans must have noticed that he has no gavel—there is nothing for him to bang it on, except his knee, which would be painful. His authority rests solely on members' trust in his impartiality.

His responsibility, apart from keeping order, is to ensure complète fairness to every member, particularly to minorities—not only the main opposition party, but also splinter parties such as the Scottish and Welsh nationalists, and the more independent members of the main parties who are thorns in the flesh of their leaders. The qualities required are great forbearance; the patience to sit through tedious hours of debate; presence (a Speaker of five feet six inches is inconceivable); a voice of resonant timbre; and perhaps above all, a dry, readily available humor. He must also have an intimate knowledge of every member and his interests, including those of his constituents, so that he will call on him when he should be heard. Bernard Weatherill seems to be a match for his greatest predecessors.

When the loyal address had been moved and seconded, the Speaker's voice rang out: "Mr. Kinnock." The Leader of the Opposition stood at the dispatch box on his side of the Table, which separates him from the prime minister, who has a slightly taller dispatch box. The six-day debate on the Queen's Speech had begun in earnest. But first one must set the scene as viewers saw it, because it partly explains why the Commons televises so well.

During the preliminaries, the House had been filling up, but there appeared not to be enough seats for all the members! Indeed, there are 650 members, but room on the benches for only 346. Another 91 may sit in the side galleries, but most latecomers, when the House is full, prefer to stand at the Bar (don't jump to conclusions; this mystery, too, shall be explained). Either way, they are not on the floor of the House, and so cannot participate. An arrangement by which almost half the members are denied seats in the body of the House may seem eccentric. But there is method in the madness.

The chamber of the Commons was destroyed during the Blitz. Toward the end of the war, inspired by an eloquent speech by Churchill, the House voted overwhelmingly to rebuild it as a replica of the old chamber. A semicircular arrangement of seats was ruled out. The chamber is rectangular. The Speaker's chair is at one end, the government benches to his right, the opposition to the left, facing each other across a narrow aisle. Already there is a drama of confrontation. Moreover, by choosing where he will sit, a member declares his allegiance, for or against the government. He cannot shilly-shally in the middle, like minor parties on the Continent or boll weevils in the House of Representatives. The phrase "to cross the floor" underscores the gravity of such a decision.

The House, deliberately, is theater. That is the reason for restricting the number of places. There are no separate seats, only four tiers of benches on either side. Given the smallness of the chamber, these seem to enclose a stage. When the House fills up, as it did during Kinnock's and Thatcher's speeches on the address, and a week later for questions to the prime minister (the members shoulder to shoulder on the benches, the rest crowded at the Bar), one might, as one watches, be with the groundlings pressing against the stage of the Globe.

It even works when the House empties, as during the full day's broadcast on Thanksgiving. In the small chamber even an attendance of only 30 or 40 members does not look spotty, and the backbenchers carry on a serious debate without having to throw their voices across a vast empty arena. The viewer who said the Commons is a "true democracy" meant that it is a true debating chamber.

About two-thirds of the way down the chamber from the Speaker, the tiers of benches on each side are divided by a gangway. This is vital to a full understanding of what is going on. On the front benches above the gangway sit the prime minister and Cabinet on one side, and the Leader of the Opposition and shadow cabinet on the other. Behind them, above the gangway, sit their more reliable supporters. On the front benches below the gangway sit the more rebellious members of their parties—including, on the government side, ministers who have resigned or been fired—and beyond them, other more independent members. Again there is drama: the blocs of loyalists and dissidents, like the fans of opposing teams at a football game.

Mrs. Thatcher has now fired or forced the resignation of so many ministers that a completely new Conservative government could almost be formed from the benches below the gangway. (Under the strict guidelines established by the House for the use of the cameras, a quick reaction shot is permitted only when a member is mentioned in a speech. When Thatcher came to the issue over which Nigel Lawson, her Chancellor of the Exchequer, recently resigned, a reaction shot showed him scowling on the front bench below the gangway, black as thunder, waiting for his turn to speak.)

To be attacked from the benches opposite is only to be expected. Disraeli on such occasions pulled his top hat over his eyes (members then wore them in the House, except when speaking) and folded his arms, pretending to slumber. But to be attacked by a member of one's party from the benches behind one can be pulverizing. (If a member is going to attack another directly, he must inform him in advance, and the victim, even if prime minister, must be in place to listen.) I was once in the press gallery when Selwyn Lloyd, then foreign secretary, was ferociously denounced by a Conservative backbencher. The next morning most reporters said he was so devastated that he finally "rushed white-faced" from the chamber. But Lloyd later laughed at this interpretation. "Did it never occur to any of them," he told me, that "I had to sit through Hinch's speech while I desperately needed to piss?"

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As for the Bar of the House, it must not be confused with the 13 (at last count) bars on the premises of the Commons that provide restorative spirits to the members, even during an all-night session. (One is also provided for members of the press gallery.) The Bar is a line drawn at the entrance to the House at the far end of the chamber from the Speaker. There is a rod that can be raised across it, but its vital symbolic significance is that when the House is in session, no one but members, the clerks of the House, and its messengers may cross it: not members of "the other place" (the Lords), or a royal messenger. It asserts the independence of the House, wrested from the crown and the Lords in centuries of conflict.

"Mr. Kinnock." The debate on the address is the kind of test in which the judgment of the House can be severe. It exists to estimate character, not expertise or skill in policy-making, and it is a merciless and usually accurate judge. A Conservative backbencher was once asked during a leadership crisis in the party what qualities members looked for in a leader. He replied at once, "Someone who will see the party through the bad patches." The leaders are emphatically the choices of the parliamentary parties, not the membership outside, and when the Speaker called Kinnock, one could see the House settle to take another look at him.

Kinnock spoke for about 45 minutes. He made little use of his notes, yet never faltered over word or syntax. This was the fluency of which the American viewers spoke, heightened by his Welsh lilt, which carried one mellifluously from clause to clause. From this, as from any other of his speeches, no one could cast him as a wild man of the left. That is his usefulness to the party. Yet something was lacking. He was too affable. There was nothing to rouse his supporters, or to tell the voters outside why they needed a Labour government. His rhetorical flourish at the end—"The government is out of touch, is running out of time, and will soon be out of power"—was neat but limp.

"The Prime Minister," the Speaker called. At her dispatch box stood a very different presence. She was nervous, even stumbled, at the beginning. She had opposed televising the House to the end. It was known that she worried about wearing glasses when she spoke. She overcame this by having the text of her speech (from which she read) printed in large type. But at first she had to read her notes on the points in Kinnock's speech she wished to answer, and she had to put on her glasses. Once she turned to her main text, the glasses stayed (noticeably) in her hand, and were even used to wag at the opposition.

I am hardly one of her fans, but from my experience of some of the great parliamentarians of the past, I have seldom seen a party leader more in command of the House. The reason for her survival was at once plain. If the rebels in her party wish to topple her—a stalking horse has already been put up to challenge her for the leadership—they had better be prepared to spill a lot of their own blood. Her spirit was clear in the effrontery of her opening sally: "When we were in opposition—which I'm sure we'll never be again." She read fast and in a monotone, but displayed precisely what Kinnock did not: strength of conviction. It was clear why *she* thought that she and the Conservatives should be maintained in power—forever!

When she sat down, members streamed out, even as the Speaker called on the leader of the Social and Liberal Democrats, who began by saying that Thatcher's gibe about never being in opposition again was offensive to the spirit of the parliamentary system. That was precisely the kind of prissy remark that has given the Liberal Democrats (born of a coalition between former right-wing Labour members and the small Liberal Party, their support drawn largely from the professional middle class) the reputation of being a party of governesses and fusspots. The House continued to empty, and there C-SPAN's coverage of the first day ended.

Kinnock made only one reference to "the new era of televised democracy." Thatcher did not mention it. Yet both leaders were on their best behavior, yielding the floor to interruptions more often and more graciously than they usually would have done. A speaker at one of the dispatch boxes can outride the clamor of several members on their feet trying to interrupt, simply by repeating the next clause of his speech, and by not budging, which causes the Speaker to call for order. Thatcher was interrupted more frequently than Kinnock—his followers were much angrier than he—and although she sometimes pleaded to be allowed "to get a little of my own speech out," she showed her experience and an unexpected charm when she met a barrage of interruptions by saying, "I have two customers over there, and one over there," and she would come to them in time.

During the proceedings on Thanksgiving Day, viewers had several chances to gauge the quality of the Speaker. When members wish to put a question about the conduct of the proceedings, they rise, "On a point of order, Mr. Speaker . . ." Points of order should be brief, but one long-winded member began by quoting a definition from the Oxford English Dictionary. There is no greater sin in the House than to be a showoff, especially an intellectual showoff. The Speaker stood. "I shall look it up," he said, and then in a voice like a spanking, "but we can't have a debate on it!" End of point of order.

During Question Time the following Tuesday, a backbencher held up a book to recommend it to the House. In all my years in the press gallery I never saw a member hold up a book. The House groaned. The Speaker stood. "Or-der Or--der!" he called, and turned to the offender. Did the book have any relevance to the question? Silence. "No," the Speaker muttered on his behalf, and called the next question. The Speaker's authority guarantees the maximum opportunity for the cut and thrust, for legitimate interruptions, while insisting on the first condition of relevance, and keeping the proceedings moving.

On Thanksgiving (as on every Thursday), the proceedings opened with Business Questions, addressed

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to the Leader of the House, who is a member of the Cabinet and frequently has the nominal title of deputy prime minister. He is now Sir Geoffrey Howe, recently kicked upstairs by Mrs. Thatcher from the Foreign Office. He first announces the business of the House for the week, and the questions to him are the pretext for raising a wide range of issues by asking that time should be found to debate them. This is also a splendid opportunity for purely partisan taunts from the opposition. In this spirit, Howe was asked if, with totalitarianism crumbling in Eastern Europe, the House could now expect free elections of Conservative leaders, a Conservative *glasnost*. Howe jumped to the dispatch box. The time for Conservatives to take advice on democracy and leadership from Labour would be when it showed that it could win elections.

The third day's debate on the address covered criminal justice, law and order, freedom, rights, and obligations. The House was seldom very full, but Americans could see the quality of debate between the backbenchers, and the subjects were emphatically those to which Americans could relate—crime on the streets, crack, immigration, gun laws, the recruitment and payment of police, even terrorism (though the main concern of the Commons is with the Irish Republican Army).

But it was during Question Time on November 28 that one could best see why the American viewers felt so involved. Although ministers know questions in advance, after each answer any member may put supplementary questions, which the Speaker allows to range freely from the original one. This is when the spontaneity, the ability to think on one's hind legs, and the facility of language are most evident. First there were 45 minutes of questions to the ministers responsible for defense and related matters of foreign policy. In quick succession, the subjects included: an accident to a nuclear submarine berthing in Cardiff; security measures for armed forces against terrorist attacks; the government commitment to the nuclear deterrent; NATO defenses in Europe; the production of chemical weapons in the U.S.S.R.; the cost of the British armed forces; the government's "grudging and penny-pinching" attitude toward ex-servicemen disabled by radiation; and the interest American companies, specifically General Dynamics, are showing in British defense industries.

At 3:15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays the Speaker calls the first question to the prime minister. The subjects on which Thatcher received supplementaries included: spending on health care, and her proposed reform of the Health Service; the privatization of industry and public utilities, specifically water (an unpopular proposal); a demand that she "let Scotland govern itself" (haughtily rejected); the policy of Britain and the European Community toward changes in Eastern Europe ("a substantial identity of views"); the beggars on the streets; what she called "damaging interunion strife" among Vauxhall car workers; and the movement of some government agencies to provincial cities to bring employment to parts of the country where she did badly in the last election.

Certainly a great deal more information is extracted from ministers and even the prime minister than by journalists at presidential news conferences in the United States. It is not for the ministers to move on to another questioner as a President can do; the next question is called by the Speaker only when he thinks the supplementaries have exhausted their usefulness. Televised Presidential news conferences are vehicles for Presidential image-building and aggrandizement; Sam Donaldson is a pussycat compared with members of the Commons when they go after a prime minister.

I was in the press gallery when Anthony Eden used Question Time to announce the agreement to form SEATO, the Southeast Asian equivalent of NATO. As is customary when a major new policy is announced, Clement Attlee, as Leader of the Opposition, said only that the opposition would consider the question, and ask for a debate later. But the rebellious left-wing Aneurin Bevan, a member of the shadow cabinet, rose to the dispatch box. It was at once evident that he had overindulged at lunch. He repudiated not only Eden and the idea of SEATO, but his own leader, pronouncing what his party's attitude would be. (In the event, the Labour Party supported SEATO.) Two days later, Bevan was expelled from the shadow cabinet and banished below the gangway.

There are interesting contrasts between the Commons and the House of Representatives. The salary of MPs (at $1.54 to the pound) is $34,739; that of Representatives, before the recent increase, $89,500. The average size of an MP's staff is 1.6 persons; of a Representative's (personal, not committee) staff, 18 persons. In its last session, the Commons met for 1,978 hours on 218 days; the Representatives for 749 hours on 140 days. The number of bills considered by the Commons in 1988-89 was 215; by the Representatives, 1,745. These last two figures suggest how much more time the Commons spends on full and general debate. One last contrast says a lot. MPs do not have offices. If their constituents come to see them, they must talk in the public lobby of the Houses of Parliament. This not only discourages pestering constituents. It means that a lobbyist would have to do his importuning in the public eye.

Setting aside local, county, and municipal government, all political activity in Britain is focused on the drama in that theater of the House of Commons. The painful contrast with the proceedings on the floor of the House of Representatives (also carried live by C-SPAN) was explicitly or implicitly remarked on by viewers. But there is another, perhaps more telling contrast. In the last general election in Britain, 75.4 percent of the people voted; in the United States, only 50.2 percent—by far the lowest figure in the democracies. The concentration of political activity on the Commons, the participation of the Cabinet, the dramatization of the debates, all combine to involve the British people, even without television. It is thus that politics becomes a worthy and adventurous calling. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Wonderful Women, and More

A couple of miracles. The first one has been on hand since 1972: Isaac Bashevis Singer's novel, **Enemies, A Love Story**. Set in New York in 1949, the book is a romantic comedy, with touches of a Feydeau farce, about survivors of Nazi persecution. This is self-evidently a daring project, and Singer triumphs completely, which is to say that the book not only meets its challenge, it clarifies why Singer took on the challenge.

Herman Broder, a Polish-Jewish scholar in his 30s, was hidden for several of the war years in a hayloft on a Polish farm. He is now married to Yadwiga, the Polish-Catholic peasant girl who cared for him, and they live in Coney Island. Herman is infatuated with, is having an affair with, Masha, a Jewish camp survivor, separated from her husband and living with her mother in the Bronx. Yadwiga doesn't know about Masha; when Herman stays overnight in the Bronx, he tells the simple Yadwiga that he is on the road selling books. But Masha knows about Yadwiga and enjoys her secret victories over the wife. Herman is having trouble enough dealing with these two obligations when Tamara shows up in Manhattan. She is the Jewish woman whom Herman married before the war, who bore him two children and who, he believed, had died in the camps along with the children. (She limps from a German bullet still in her hip.) Now she adds to Herman's already frenzied life an unvindictive but persistent threat.

The miracle is that, without sacrificing one iota of conviction about these people's pasts—they have indeed been through horrors—Singer also makes the marital-amorous predicaments farcically torturous. It's as though Singer were saying: If you died, you died. If you survived, life is waiting for you again, with all the vanities and lusts and silliness and joys of being alive.

Singer created the first miracle. Now his book itself creates a second: it caused—inspired—Paul Mazursky to make a good film of it. Not all who know Mazursky's earlier work (*Blume in Love, An Unmarried Woman, Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, etc.) will readily believe this. In the past he has striven to be "European," and the results have mostly been pathetic—with the pathos of a small man overreaching himself. This time there is no imitation: he works directly from what he understands and what he can see. Of course with Singer's novel in hand, he had a considerable head start over his past efforts, and he has made the multitextured most of it.

The screenplay, which Mazursky wrote with Roger L. Simon, condenses the book but not drastically and with no warping or prettifying. Most of the dialogue—freighted with exasperation, wry patience, seasoned acceptance—comes from Singer. The cinematographer is Fred Murphy, who did so well for John Huston in *The Dead* and seems to have envisioned this film in plaques of light; the light of each of the apartments that figure in the story, the light of a cheap hotel room, are all individualized and apt. Mazursky has directed with a refreshing absence of frill. Once in a while he lets in a camera-conscious touch, like a shot in which a woman walks from middle distance to immense close-up, but in the main he merely serves the story well.

He has served it best with his casting and with the performances he evokes. Herman is Ron Silver, harried and passionate, saturnine yet struggling, in a cheap shirt that doesn't quite fit and an almost omnipresent cheap hat. If Silver seems unlikely as a man about whom three women would care, then Mazursky has fulfilled Singer. An older man, envious of Herman's women, says, "Where do you find them? No offense, but to me you look like a nothing." (That "no offense" is a real Singer touch.) Silver makes the man's passion for Masha so consuming, his guilt and gratitude with Yadwiga so painful, his fear and shame with Tamara so quietly true, that we remember a reality: only in plays and films do people have to be large-scale to have large feelings.

Alan King plays a rich Central Park West rabbi for whom Herman does ghostwriting on Jewish subjects. No one could call King a reticent actor, but after he has been around for a while, we're convinced that his overripe manner has at last found its right use.

The three women are the crown of the film. A young Polish actress named Margaret Sophie Stein, new to the American screen, plays Yadwiga perfectly. In Coney Island, of all places, she makes the area around her a preserve of the ultrasimple ethos from which she came. Yadwiga's servility, her very vulnerability are

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Henry V. *The young British actor Kenneth Branagh has adapted and directed and stars in a version of the Shakespeare play that challenges the Olivier film yet is very much itself. For the most part, Branagh succeeds stirringly. (Reviewed 12/4/89)* **My Left Foot.** *Christy Brown, an Irish victim of cerebral palsy, who wrote and painted with his left foot, did an autobiography that now makes a salty, non-maudlin, highly moving film, crammed with fine acting. (11/27/89)* **Mystery Train.** *If you like Jim Jarmusch's work, this will really test you. A spare account of three sets of lives that cross in a seedy Memphis hotel. A piece of daring yet gratifying minimalism. (12/11/89)* **sex, lies, and videotape.** *Four young people, two of them married to each other, swimming more dreamily than they know in a sexual sea. Extraordinary. (9/4/89)* **—SK**

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her strengths, binding Herman to her. Stein conveys this, adding almost child-like charm.

Masha, tormented, contemptuous, mordant, sensual, is played irresistibly by the Swedish actress Lena Olin. As the mistress in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Olin showed a power of taunt and sex. Here, differently shaded, she shows the same qualities blended with a sense of the unspeakable that is behind her and the uncertain that is ahead.

And then there is the woman who is rapidly becoming a new goddess of American film, Anjelica Huston. She is Tamara. It's hard to believe that it was only in 1985, in *Prizzi's Honor*, that Huston gave her first truly visible performance. In little more than four years she has shown a range that no American woman except Meryl Streep can equal, and range is only part of the matter. Huston has been, without exception, first-class in everything.

From our first glimpse of her here, she is the buffeted, sardonic, sexual Tamara—liberated by what she has been through—as surely as she was Joyce's Gretta in *The Dead*. Her face and her voice, seemingly created anew each time, have the true actor's magic: in addition to all else, they inspire a kind of confidence. (She will *be* this woman, we think: she already *is* this woman.) One of the film world's chief jobs, I would say, is to find adequate roles for Huston. Along with Streep, her presence is a stroke of luck that needs proper celebration-by-use for years to come.

A word, too, for Judith Malina, who plays Masha's somewhat loopy mother. Malina, veteran of many years with her late husband, Julian Beck, in the radical Living Theater, here gives a quite conventional, utterly successful performance—a woman who is like a leaf that has blown through the window of this Bronx apartment in a storm.

Of all that could be further praised in Mazursky's own work, I cite only two instances. First is a scene between Herman and Masha's estranged husband, played by Mazursky himself. (He began as an actor and has appeared in a number of films.) At the husband's invitation, Herman meets him for a glass of tea in a cafeteria off the Coney Island boardwalk to discuss Masha. The meeting is an exercise in opposing dignities, in caution and thrust. In its emotional and kinetic contours, it's a perfectly made, subtly comic scene.

And there's the Ferris wheel. Through most of the picture, it's just part of the Coney Island landscape. Then Mazursky makes it the very last shot—by itself. It's his crystallization of Singer's theme: the wheel turns the way that human life keeps frivoling along, despite the fact that human lives are not really funny. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Plays for People, Perhaps

Two recent productions are giving audiences pleasure of a kind one rarely finds in the New York theater anymore. Arthur Laurents's book for *Gypsy* and Jerry Sterner's Wall Street satire *Other People's Money* both center on people with deep moral deficiencies, which means they are rooted in character rather than levitated by mechanical spectacle. And Jule Styne's melodious score for *Gypsy* reminds us of how exhilarating Broadway show music once was before being smeared with Andrew Lloyd Webber's patented brand of oleomargarine.

Gypsy (St. James Theatre) also reminds us of what an inspired lyricist Stephen Sondheim is—or was, before he began composing his own scores. His stunning *West Side Story* debut had already established him as a shrewd master of ironic verse. "Office Krupke," particularly, with its abrupt transitions, unexpected internal rhymes, and street-smart wit, and "America," with its demythologizing of tropical island fantasies, were in refreshing contrast to Laurents's book, a sudsy reduction of *Romeo and Juliet* into interethnic soap opera. In *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Sondheim displayed an equally warm affinity for the raucous rhythms of vaudeville and burlesque, even though his score for that musical, sprightly and exuberant as it was, struck me as somewhat superfluous to an event that already had integrity as straightforward Plautine farce.

As Sondheim's musical ambitions escalated, his lyrics lost some of their edge, becoming least congenial in the blurry aesthetic editorializing of *Sunday in the Park with George* or the chic urban doggerel of *Into the Woods* (de-da-de-da). Sondheim has surely written some wonderful songs. But his compulsion to marry serial music and *sprechstimme*, not to mention furrowed (middle) brow themes, to the conventions of musical comedy has resulted in compositional forms that not only etiolate his scores, but also denature his literary wit.

In *Gypsy*, however, he is inspired—both by the characters Laurents based on the show-business memoirs written by the principals, and by Styne's genius for melodic line. The man responsible for the original rhyme schemes of "Small World" ("We have so much in common / It's a phenomenon"), the comic confusions of "Mr. Goldstone" ("Have a Goldstone, Mr. Eggroll"), and the ecdysiast enthusiasms of "Gotta Have a Gimmick" ("I'm electrifying / And I'm not even trying") is riding some very special wave that lifts the whole occasion. As an experimental auteur, Sondheim has sometimes been plagued by mannerism and pretentiousness, but as a lyricist of Broadway show tunes, he still has no peer.

The narrative strength of *Gypsy* does not lie in its title character. This is not so much the story of an ugly duckling as that of a stage hen—a species of ambitious American mother who at *Gypsy's* premiere in 1959 became the subject of musical comedy for the very first time. Rose, the mother, is the heart of the work, the only character endowed with any complication, and her single-minded, sometimes brutal determination to turn her older daughter, Baby June, into a star makes her sacrifice not only her own love life but the happiness of her other daughter, Louise.

Professionally ignored and a little disdained by Rose, Louise enjoys a fabled metamorphosis—not into a swan (though she brandishes swan feathers) but into the stylish stripper Gypsy Rose Lee, while Baby June becomes the actress-playwright June Havoc. In the memoirs both women wrote, Rose is a less affectionate and forgivable figure than she is on stage. But the same qualities that seemed somewhat repellent to her children make the revival timely. In her independence of mind and her refusal to be cowed or domesticated, Rose satisfies certain feminist requirements that make her more acceptable to her sisters than her daughters. What may also have influenced her treatment is the relationship to their mothers of the musical's three male Jewish creators, who invest what might otherwise be considered a monstrous maternal drive with exculpatory grit and courage.

What lends *Gypsy* real color, though, is its theatrical wraparound. Kenneth Foy's basic set is a universal backstage, and all main events become a subspecies of show business ("Don't you know there's a Depression?" "Of course, I know. I read *Variety*"). Appearing in a number of broken-down vaudeville

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houses in a number of depressed cities, Baby June in her blond curls, white rolled stockings, and gold shoes leads her four newsboys (Louise included) through numberless choruses of "Let Me Entertain You," punctuated by handstands, splits, baton twirling, and Jerome Robbins's wonderfully satiric choreography. Eventually, time—abetted by a celebrated strobe light transformation—intervenes to change Baby June first into Dainty June and then into a June Bride after she walks out on the act to get married, leaving Mom to belt out "Everything's Coming Up Roses" through clenched teeth at the fall of the first act curtain.

After failing to fill June's golden shoes as a vaudeville star, Louise enjoys her own transformation when she learns she's not only beautiful but can stimulate men with arch commentary while removing long white gloves. It is Rose who coaches her to be grand and elegant ("with that classy ladylike walk"), but her willingness to expose Louise to the male leers of the burlesque house is enough to make Rose's boyfriend take a walk. Louise, now a headliner at Minsky's (I used to sneak in to ogle her there at the age of 11), declares her own independence, while in "Rose's Turn," her abandoned mother expresses defiant self-pity, before receiving absolution from her daughter on the way to a party.

This is all sure stuff, and it is played to the hilt by Tyne Daly as Rose and a strong supporting cast under Laurents's knowing direction. Daly doesn't age a year through the decades of the action—she is always the good-natured, now portly "Cagney and Lacey" wisecracker in a page boy—and she often seems less to be singing songs than announcing station stops. Still, she's a more polished, more romantic actress than Ethel Merman, and by using the piercing top notes of her speaking voice, abetted by clever amplification in the songs, she manages to simulate the loudmouth requirements of the classical belter. Where she fails, and the whole enterprise falls down, is in acknowledging the coarseness and ruthlessness that motivate a stage mother's ambitions for her children. But one shouldn't look too hard for Mother Courage's wagon on the stage of a Broadway musical.

Other People's Money (Minetta Lane Theatre) is about another redeemable monster in the American vein. Closer to the ethical ambiguousness of Mike Nichols's *Working Girl* than to the moral firmness of Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* or Caryl Churchill's *Serious Money*, Jerry Sterner's play is the "Let Me Entertain You" of arbitrages, substituting the arcane mysteries of inside trading for the inside dope of show business. Ostensibly an examination of predatory financial practices, replete with definitions of "white knights," "shark repellents," "poison pills," "golden parachutes," and other current terms in the corporate lexicon, *Other People's Money* is really a celebration of the romance of capitalism, whose hero is magically transformed before our eyes—Captain Queeg-style—from an object of disgust into a heroic icon.

As played by Kevin Conway with matted hair and beard, stained suit, spreading paunch, disappearing neck, hunched back, and red suspenders, "Larry the Liquidator" Garfinkle makes his first appearance as a singularly obnoxious Jew. He is visiting a Rhode Island wire and cable company with the intention of gobbling it up, and by contrast with the honest New Englanders who run the place in their cardigan sweaters and modest suits, he behaves as if he's competing for Vulgarian of the Year. "Haven't seen a place this shitty since I left the Bronx," he announces to the startled office staff, which recoils, along with the audience, before his repulsive mannerisms. Responsive only to dogs, dough, and doughnuts (not, of course, those baked with honey or wheat), Larry at first seems like a walking vindication of anti-Semitic prejudice.

On the narrative surface, the play is about the extinction of the old business values—employers who loved their workers and their product—by the new predatory arbitrageurs who love only money. But while Larry is perfectly willing to admit he is motivated by greed ("I don't need the money, I *want* the money. Money is unconditional acceptance"), the playwright is really more interested in pulling off a theatrical stunt familiar to us from such works as *Phantom of the Opera*—turning the monster into the love interest, making the audience embrace the object of its initial disgust. The moment the beautiful female lawyer, Kate Sullivan, sets out to battle Larry on behalf of the company, you realize that the play is to be a romantic comedy rather than a social satire, with Larry and Kate playing Beatrice and Benedict. He may destroy the company and put all its employees out of work, but Kate somehow finds him irresistibly charming, and by the close of the curtain, she has become first his lawyer, then his partner, then his wife (their two kids are called "Little Bear" and "Little Bull").

"Whatever happened to that brave young girl who set out to do battle to heal all the world's ills?" her mother pauses to ask, while trying to comfort the

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ethical employer who dies two years later from the struggle. Apparently, that brave young girl has gone into the office shredder, along with John F. Kennedy's inaugural address and all existing copies of *Born Yesterday*. One has to admire how the playwright and the production carry off this act of moral equivocation. Conway, who played *King John* in the Park (here he seems to be playing *Richard III*), is a bit overblown in the opening scenes—his blustering performance is better suited for the Winter Garden than the more intimate Minetta Lane—but the actor's high obnoxiousness soon gives way to a steadily evolving charm.

Sterner apparently regards Garfinkle's counterparts—Ivan Boesky, Carl Icahn, Irving Jacobson—as "modern gunslingers" in the tradition of John Wayne and Gary Cooper, and like all such heroes who square off on a dusty road, Garfinkle certainly has his appeal. So does spunky Kate in the pungent performance by Mercedes Ruehl (all the parts are vigorously acted). But the real triumph of the evening is how *Other People's Money* manages to make the skewed values currently turning us into a second-rate nation the object of consent and applause. •

The Black Pain

BY CHRISTOPHER MAURER

Federico García Lorca: A Life by Ian Gibson

(Pantheon, 551 pp., $29.95)

"*No me hagas lorquismo!*" Federico García Lorca once cried despairingly to an actor who was turning *Blood Wedding* into declamatory melodrama. "Don't pull that Lorca business on *me*!" It would be hard to say just what he meant. But today, as in 1933, when *Blood Wedding* brought him his first great triumph on the Spanish stage, the atmosphere around Lorca's work is heavy with the emotionalism of *lorquismo*.

There is, for example, his "directness." Lorca is said to be one of the most "elemental" of Spanish poets. He seems to lead us urgently and directly to the central mysteries of human existence. In the 13 plays and nine books of verse that Lorca was able to complete between 1917 to 1936—it was an amazingly short career—he spoke unforgettably of all that most interests us: the otherness of nature, the demons of personal identity and artistic creation, sex, childhood, and death. And there is the "social" stereotype. Lorca's theater, and much of his poetry, are commonly seen as a meditation on the relation of the individual to society. The tragic fates of his characters seem stunningly alike. In *Yerma*, as in *The House of Bernarda Alba* or *The Gypsy Ballads*, love is defeated violently by social evils: authoritarianism, intolerance, the preoccupation with honor, ignorance, stupidity, rural backwardness.

"The theme of love lost, of the love that could or should have been, but which is thwarted, is fundamental in all Lorca's work," Ian Gibson writes in this first fully documented biography of Lorca in English. Few critics would disagree. For the past several decades, Lorca's work, especially his writing for the theater, has been folded neatly into abstraction: Desire is defeated by Death, Natural Law is crushed by Social Law, Authority destroys Freedom. "Is Lorca, Spain's greatest modern writer, to be circumscribed so easily?" asked Douglas Day in the introduction to a recent translation of Lorca's so-called "Rural Trilogy" (*Blood Wedding*, *Yerma*, and *The House of Bernarda Alba*). His answer was, yes: "As a thinker, Lorca was swift and agile, but not deep."

In Spain and elsewhere (Lorca is now read in Turkish, Czech, and Esperanto), the formulaic "social" interpretation of Lorca's work has been accompanied by political allegorizing. His brutal assassination in August 1936, at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, by order of the fascist governor of Granada, forever changed the meaning of his work. The poems and plays are read in the shadow of that death. The fate of his characters—for example, the mysterious horseman of "Rider's Song" (1924)—seems premonitory:

Córdoba.
Distant and lonely.

Black pony, large moon,
in my saddle-bag, olives.
Well as I know the roads,
I shall never reach Córdoba.

Over the plain, through the wind,
black pony, red moon.
Death keeps a watch on me
from Córdoba's towers.

Oh, such a long way to go!
And, oh, my spirited pony!
Ah, but death awaits me
before I ever reach Córdoba.

Córdoba.
Distant and lonely.
(translated by Alan S. Trueblood)

Frustrated desire, repressed sexuality, the unfinished journey: these are the themes that seem to bind Lorca's life and writings together. Few critics have resisted the temptation to extrapolate, to read the life and the works as the story of modern Spain. Lorca's death was the death of liberalism, or the death of the Second Republic, or the death of a peculiarly democratic vision of art. Seldom has a biographer had a better opportunity to unravel, and to meditate upon, the mysterious relation of life, literature, and social myth.

Lorca was a charismatic and complicated figure: preeminent poet of absence; renewer, with Miguel de Unamuno and Ramón de Valle-Inclán, of the modern Spanish stage; stern, inspired mediator—perhaps the most successful in modern Europe—of poetry and theater. ("Theater," he once said, "is the poetry that rises from the page and becomes human.") And he was much else besides: pianist, actor, director, lecturer, conversationalist, a perpetrator of witty pastiches and parodies, a maker of unforgettable drawings.

Born in Granada in 1898, the eldest child of a wealthy landowner and a village schoolmistress, raised in the river plain (Vega) of Granada, the loveliest, most luxuriant countryside of Spain, Lorca went as a young man to Madrid, where he witnessed an extraordinary flowering of Spanish letters. At the Residencia de Estudiantes, an experimental university residence that was designed to nurture a cultural elite that would steer Spanish society toward liberal ideals, he lived in close contact with the best musicians, poets, painters, and scientists of his day. (His closest friends included Salvador Dalí, Luis Buñuel, and the poet Rafael Alberti.) A stream of foreign visitors—Wells, Breton, Chesterton, Einstein, Curie, Valéry, Howard Carter, Le Corbusier—reminded the "Residentes" that Spain was once again in intellectual dialogue with the rest of Europe.

Dividing his time between Granada and Madrid, pursuing, by fits and starts, a double degree in Law and Philosophy and Letters, Lorca wrote incessantly between 1919 and 1927: poems, narra-

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tions, puppet plays, the libretto of a comic opera (for Manuel de Falla), dialogues, prose poems, occasional newspaper articles, charming lectures on Góngora and on traditional song. The publication in 1928 of *The Gypsy Ballads* made him Spain's most widely read young poet. The *Ballads* drew on both Spanish folklore and the metaphorical splendor of Góngora. Never had a collection of ballads so successfully blended lyricism with narration. And like the folk ballads, the book appealed both to the unlearned reader and to the intellectual. ("Molière was right," Lorca once said, "to read his works to his cook.") This success depressed him in a way that nobody—not even Gibson—has been able to explain, and a year later he embarked on a long trip to New York and Havana.

On a porch in Newburgh, New York, in a summer cottage in Lake Eden, Vermont, and in a room at Columbia University, where he pretended to be studying English, Lorca wrote dark verses on the inconsolable loneliness of modern man. (They were published posthumously as *Poet in New York*.) At 31 he returned to Spain with a will to reform the Spanish theater: to foster amateur groups and repertory companies that would train new actors and find new audiences; to adapt and to revive the classics; and, by means of his own writing, to remind the contemporary theater of its need for poetry, and of its roots in Greek tragedy, *commedia dell'Arte*, Romanticism, and traditional art. He spoke frequently of the need to free the theater from the dictates of the middle class. He was listened to with interest, but time was running out.

The triumph of *Blood Wedding* earned Lorca an invitation to Buenos Aires, and when he returned to Spain for the second time, after a wildly successful tour of Argentina and Uruguay in 1933-34, his plays and poems were attracting attention in France, Italy, and the United States. In the final, busiest years of his life, he managed to write a book of love sonnets, and his two gravest elegies: the *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (on the death in the bullring of a beloved friend) and the collection published posthumously as *Dívan of the Tamarit*.

Of all this, Gibson is an unfailingly accurate chronicler. His book comes very close to fulfilling its modest title. *Federico García Lorca: A Life* is less "a life" than a chronicle, a factual, linear account of Lorca's movements, correspondence, friendships, and literary activity, month by month, sometimes day by day. It is a virtuoso performance in biographical research, especially valuable for its effort to gather facts in a country that is often hostile to biographical inquiry. This book (and the two-volume, 1,332-page Spanish work of which it is a skillful condensation) will provide abundant source material for future scholars, who will not have the benefit of conversations with survivors and contemporaries.

Gibson's book is a dossier, not a portrait. Its controlling ideal—an understandable one, given the political cant that surrounds Lorca's life and death—seems to be to let the facts speak for themselves. The facts, Gibson complains in his introduction, tell us "a great deal about the public man," but "much, much less about the inner one." The distinction is not a thoughtful one (the public man *is* the inner one), and it says much about Gibson's vision of biography. But thanks to many months of research in the dimmest of newspaper archives, Lorca's public activities are better known than would have seemed possible. His political beliefs, in particular, and his role in the cultural life of the Second Republic (1931-36) are carefully delineated.

FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Lorca was profoundly bored by politics and convinced that poetry should not be directed toward partisan ends. ("The artist, and particularly the poet, is always an anarchist.") Still, he believed in the social mission of art, especially the theater, and Gibson shows that he also spoke out bravely in the 1930s against fascism and anti-Semitism. His work as director of La Barraca, a government-sponsored university theater troupe that brought the Spanish classics to rural audiences, made him a frequent target of the right-wing press, as did the anti-bourgeois sentiment of some of his plays. When *Yerma* (the tragedy of a childless woman whose desperation leads her to strangle her indifferent husband) opened in Madrid in 1934, with the politically controversial Margarita Xirgu in the leading role, the work was condemned by right-wing newspapers as an "immoral, anti-Spanish, irreligious, and odious play."

For as long as he could, Lorca held on to his political neutrality. Despite pressure from friends, he refused to join a political party. But when, toward the end of his life, political circumstances turned him into a "poet of the people," he took up the role with something between fear and exhilaration. In a moving letter in October 1935 to his parents, which was published after Gibson's book was completed, Federico describes the response to one of his poetry readings in Barcelona. He had addressed a working-class

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audience, aware that almost exactly a year earlier the army and the Civil Guard had ruthlessly quelled a miners' strike in northern Spain; though Spain was still a republic, the elections had swept the right into power. One of the poems that Lorca recited, perhaps for the last time (he had less than a year to live), was the "Ballad of the Civil Guard":

> . . . their skulls—and this is why
> they do not cry—are lead.
> They ride the roads
> with souls of patent leather.
> Hunchbacked and nocturnal,
> they command, where they appear,
> the silence of dark rubber
> and fears of fine sand.
> They go as they will,
> and hidden in their heads
> is a vague astronomy
> of phantasmagoric pistols.
> (translated by Will Kirkland)

Lorca read these lines—he tells his parents—to a crowd so large that it filled the theater and flowed out onto the street, where people listened over loudspeakers:

> The way I was received by the workers was extremely moving. It seemed so *true*, this contact with the real people; I was so moved I had a lump in my throat and could hardly speak. . . . When I read the "Ballad of the Civil Guard," the whole theater rose to its feet and shouted, "Long live the poet of the people!" And then I had to undergo more than an hour and a half of people standing in line to shake my hand: artisans, old workers, mechanics, children, students. It was the loveliest act I have experienced in my life. . . . No doubt the Right will seize upon all this in its campaign against Margarita [Xirgu] and me, but it doesn't matter. It is almost better that way—the way we stand will be out in the open once and for all. Anyway, in Spain it is no longer possible to be *neutral*.

Lorca's relation to politics probably caused him more anguish than Gibson's book allows us to see. On the one hand, there were his deeply rooted liberal convictions, his struggle for "neutrality," his disdain (shared by his older friends Pedro Salinas and Jorge Guillén) for art with a partisan ax to grind. On the other hand, there was the considerable prestige of the poetry of "social commitment" (this was the mid-1930s), and the temptation to emulate his younger friend Rafael Alberti, whose career as a poet seemed to parallel his own. After three early books inspired by traditional poetry, and a brief venture into Surrealism, Alberti had visited Germany, France, and the Soviet Union, and had declared himself a "poet in the street." Lorca's ambivalence toward politics led him to condemn Alberti in 1933 for having "turned Communist," and for writing "not poetry . . . but bad journalistic literature" ("Proletarian art! What is *that*?"). It also led him to profess "admiration" and "deep respect" for Alberti's "sincerity" a few years later.

The rivalry with Alberti—it is never fully explored by Gibson—caused irritation in some quarters. Describing the sudden politicization of the world of letters in the months preceding the declaration of the Second Republic in April 1931, Salinas writes (unjustly) to Guillén, "Only the *children*, only Federico and Alberti, go on worrying exclusively about themselves and about each other." (Gibson did not consult the unpublished correspondence of Guillén and Salinas. It is one of the richest, longest, and most intelligent exchanges in the history of Spanish literature.) A few years later, when Lorca had begun to write *The Dream of Life* (*Play Without a Title*, in Carlos Bauer's English translation), an unfinished work that revolves wobbly around what Lorca described as "socioeconomic themes," Salinas remarks ironically, "I'm afraid that, in his noble emulation of Rafael, Federico is about to fall into the *social* trap. It seems he has written a scorchingly Communist drama [*un drama comunistísimo*] so as not to be left behind." Soon Lorca was mourned in Republican Spain, in Europe, in the United States, as a martyr to a political cause. It is fascinating to think that only a year before his death his political commitment was taken with a grain of salt by one of his closest friends.

In Spain Lorca's sex life has sometimes been as controversial as his politics. Certainly neither subject was treated adequately by previous biographers. At the premiere of *Yerma*, Gibson tells us, "shouts of 'Lesbian!' and 'Queer!' were . . . directed at [Xirgu] and Lorca respectively." Decades after the poet's assassination, Franco's apologists sought to divest it of political meaning by imputing it (absurdly) to an act of jealousy and revenge in the "homosexual underworld" of Granada. Lorca was gay (but, one of his friends told Gibson, "not at all effeminate"). Though Gibson complains how difficult it is to research "the life of a homosexual artist in Spanish-speaking communities," he tells us movingly about the three great loves of Lorca's life: Salvador Dalí, the sculptor Emilio Aladrén, and Rafael Rodríguez Rapún, an engineering student who served for a time as Lorca's personal secretary.

And yet Gibson's complaint about Lorca's friends' "deep unwillingness to discuss or even acknowledge his homosexuality," to speak "coherently," to tell

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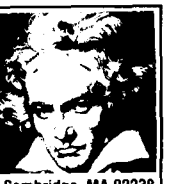

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"something interesting," to "tell all" (even in Cuba, where the poet became "more openly homosexual," there is "little solid information about [his] amorous activity") seems unwarranted, and beside the point. Would such information give us a more intimate picture of the poet? Gibson does not show that it would. The facts that he enters into the record—Dalí's insistence that Lorca "attempted to sodomize him"; Lorca's fling in Havana with "a handsome and vigorous 20-year-old Mulatto"; an orgy of sailors in the Brooklyn apartment of Hart Crane—only remind the reader of the book's limitations as a "life." For Lorca's sex life will never be as interesting as his sexuality; and the study of his sexuality does not require detective work, snooping in bars, or sifting Cuban gossip. It is bound up with Lorca's aesthetics, and memorably inscribed in his work.

In an earlier biography, Marcelle Auclair wrote that Lorca's "greatest fear was, undoubtedly, that his parents would discover that he was an 'invert.' " Gibson adds discreetly, "We may be fairly sure that the necessity of having to lead a double life in a society where homosexuality was considered abhorrent played a large part in the poet's underlying sadness, and, at times, despair." But how the poet managed to live that "double life" vis-à-vis his family is a question Gibson leaves to others. Lorca was extremely close to his younger brother Francisco, author of a fine memoir of the early years, and to his mother ("I belong to my mother," he remarked two years before his death). But Gibson deals with these relationships so hastily and so schematically that he tarries until page 337 to acknowledge that "Doña Vicenta Lorca was, by all accounts, a formidable figure, in her own way." He detects a "mother fixation" in one of the early poems, and notices that several of Lorca's characters have a "dominating mother" and "may at a deeper level reflect Lorca's own domestic experience as a child." And that is about all.

The poet once said that he had inherited his father's passionate nature and his mother's intelligence. That intelligence, tempered with irony, is revealed in her frequent letters to her son, none of which Gibson was able to consult. (The newly formed Fundación Federico García Lorca in Madrid had not yet made them available.) The letters show her to have been a wonderful confidante, as aware of her son's genius as she was of his need to "acquire some culture" (*culturarte*), as eager to see his works in print as she was skeptical about his constant assurances that he was "studying hard." "I can see you've made yourself into a real student, at least in appearance," she tells him affectionately, shortly after his move to Madrid. "You know that way we'll stop bothering you. For my part, child, I must tell you I can't wait to read something of yours in print. In your handwriting, one can't read your poems without hitting a false note every other second. And frankly, one can't get any taste out of them."

Doña Vicenta's insistence that Lorca publish his poetry (he was often reluctant to see his works "dead on the page") is everywhere. She does what she can to soothe his writerly frustrations, reminds him not to expect understanding from people with old-fashioned ideas about poetry, tries to reassure her husband that their son was going to amount to something as a writer:

> What I would like you to tell me about is what you're thinking of doing with all the precious things you've got tucked away. Surely they aren't just to build up an archive. If all this is a secret, well and good. But if not, tell me and no one else, write me a little note and I'll keep it to myself and not show anyone . . .

In more than one letter to his friends, Lorca tells of his father's concern about his son's having "no career but poetry"; Don Federico was an intensely practical man. The notes that Lorca received twice a week from his mother must have cheered him considerably. "You shouldn't neglect your Literature," she tells him in October 1920, when he was 22 and had just reduced his course load at the university. "For me it is more important than all the careers in the world. Better said, it is the best career of all, both for you and for me."

If she "dominated" him, it was by urging him not to waste time, not to be discouraged, not to aim too low:

> You musn't content yourself with the admiration of a few. That isn't enough. Many, *many* people must know of you—everyone. . . . But you should give everything the time it requires, no more, so that you aren't, for example, waiting around for Tagore to arrive [he was to visit the Residencia] and neglecting your own things. . . . As for your friends, I beg you not to lose more time with them than you need to rest.

Other letters in the Lorca archives, many of which Gibson believed to be lost, will allow future biographers a more intimate look at the poet's relation to his family: his letters to his parents (and theirs to him) during the triumphant visit to Buenos Aires; the letters home of his brother and two sisters; the hundreds of pages of juvenilia, much of it autobiographical, written in 1917-18, little of which was available to Gibson. Although he did a fine job at gathering the poet's own letters and dating them properly (Lorca often dated his poems, but almost never his letters), Gibson made no use at all of the correspondence, unpublished notes and journals of the poets and writers (Juan Ramón Jiménez, Salinas, Guillén, Gerardo Diego, Juan Guerrero, José Bergamín, Ortega y Gasset) who knew him best and commented most intelligently on his public behavior, on his rivalry with others, on their common literary milieu. Much of this material is in public archives (the Salinas-Guillén correspondence, for example, is at Harvard, where it has been available to scholars for over a decade).

The most direct and arduous path to "intimacy" with his subject lay directly through the works. And perhaps the most melancholy failure of Gibson's book is the way he reads Lorca's poems and plays. He has searched out "autobiographical elements," identified the family servants and the local eccentrics who appear in the plays, scanned them for "fixations" and psychological "complexes," summarized the reviews, and explained the circumstances of composition and publication. But the reading itself is brutally thematic. "Death and frustrated love," he writes, "are obsessively recurrent themes." The "obsession with sexual frustration" that is everywhere in Lorca's work makes a powerful case for "living one's instinctual life to the full," in defiance of society. *Blood Wedding* is "a gloss on that belief," which is no less evident in the works of adolescence than it is in the "Rural Trilogy":

> If Leonardo and the Bride [of *Blood Wedding*] had followed at the right time the call of instinct instead of yielding to socio-economic pressures, the tragedy would not have occurred. Yerma and Doña Rosita have a similar fate. A fate against which Lorca's last tragic heroine, Adela, rebels furiously and vainly in *The House of Bernarda Alba*.

Lost in the chain of cause and effect—in a notion of causality alien to Lorca's vision of tragedy—is the poet's concern for style. It was an obsession quite as important as "amorous frustration," repressed instincts, and socioeconomic pressures. One of the hallmarks of Lorca's art is its constant allusion to, and mimicry of, other styles and other manners; this was an emblem, some would say, of his modernity. The most "direct" of modern Spanish poets is, paradoxically, also the most elaborately mannered.

When Lorca begins to write *Mariana Pineda*, for example, a self-consciously "Romantic" drama in verse about Granada's 19th-century heroine, executed

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for embroidering the flag of liberty, he considers making the play "a sort of *stylized* painting of the kind that blind men use to illustrate their ballads: a *crime* [like the ones sung about in the public squares], where the red blood [of the heroine] can blend with the red of the curtain." As work advances, he decides to employ "all of the lovely old clichés of Romanticism," and give it the air, even the faded yellow color, of an old lithograph. Some of the characters strike characteristically Romantic poses: "Mariana sits down next to the chair, her profile to the audience. Fernando is close by . . . . They compose a classical picture of the period." These tableaux were ingeniously "framed" by Salvador Dalí's settings. The definitive version is subtitled *Popular Ballad in Three Engravings*.

And so it is with the poems. The style often alludes to another epoch, another manner, another medium. In titles and subtitles, in interviews and letters, Lorca asks us to read his poems as songs, his drawings as "theorems," his plays as black-and-white photographs or as ballet. Few Spanish writers have ever crossed artistic boundaries with such insistence and such grace. And few have ever drawn on such a wealth of artistic forms. The folksongs that were glossed and gathered into songbooks by Renaissance courtiers, the piano repertoire of Beethoven and Chopin, and the cantatas of Bach (No. 140 is echoed in the wedding scene of *Blood Wedding*); the comic films of Chaplin and Keaton; the costumes designed by Picasso for the Russian ballet . . . these are a few of the sources that Lorca drew on in the stylization of his own work.

"Flower," from *Songs* (1927), commemorates an encounter with haiku:

The magnificent willow
of the rain was falling.

Oh round moon
on white branches!
(translated by Alan S. Trueblood)

An early collection titled *Suites* experiments with the theme and variations. Here is the beginning of "Night: Suite for Piano and Poet's Voice":

That road
got no people.
That road.

That weevil
got no home.
That weevil.

And this sheepbell
gone to sleep.
This sheepbell.
(translated by Jerome Rothenberg)

Similarly, in one of his "Four Ballades in Yellow," Lorca evokes the song of children:

High up on the mountain
a little green tree

& a shepherd who comes
& a shepherd who goes.

Sleepy old olive trees
going down the warm valley

& a shepherd who comes
& a shepherd who goes.

Not white ewes nor a dog
nor a sheephook nor love

for the shepherd who goes.

Like a shadow in gold
you dissolve in the wheat

you shepherd who comes.
(translated by Jerome Rothenberg)

The problem of style should be at the center of any life of Lorca. For style is a way of bearing the "burden of the past," of allaying the "anxiety of influence," of dealing ironically with himself—with his own *lorquismo*—and with the unbearably "picturesque." Being a poet in Granada cannot have been easy. When he deals with the most stereotypical of Andalusian themes—gypsy knife fights, smugglers, the Alhambra, the guitar, *cante jondo*—he knows that all of those subjects have already been saturated with "literature."

"I deserve at least a smile for my daring," he writes to a friend in 1922 as he polishes off *Poem of the Deep Song*, a book of poems "stylized in the manner of popular art," about the Andalusian music commonly known as flamenco. And he is careful to retreat to a safe aesthetic distance, avoiding what is known in Spanish as *una españolada*: broad brush strokes of commonplace and color. The subject can be a totally serious one—death in a knife fight, as in "Surprise"—

He was dead in the street,
a knife in his breast.
No one knew him.
How the streetlamp trembled.
Mother!
How the little lamp trembled
in the street!

—but the voice is not entirely Lorca's own. He is alluding to the emotionally overwrought style of the *cante jondo* repertoire, speaking mimetically in the high-pitched voice of the *cantaor* (the chanter or singer).

In his treatment of Spanish subjects, in his use of traditional art as a stylizing medium, Lorca's beloved mentor was Manuel de Falla. The latter had praised Debussy for capturing the "feeling of Spain" without ever having set foot in Andalucía. "It is well known," Falla writes, "that Debussy always avoided repeating himself. 'It is necessary,' he said, 'to adapt one's métier to the character one would like each work to have.' How right he was!" That is a fine summary of Lorca's own poetics. It must have fascinated him, as it did Falla, to what extent the "Spanish style" had been created by foreigners—Bizet, Rimsky-Korsakov, Chabrier, Ravel, Debussy, Glinka—many of whom had never visited Spain. And Lorca placed himself at the same imaginative distance.

The consideration of Lorca's style would help do away with the formulaic, monothematic reading of his work that is exemplified by this biography. His writing is not "about" the defeat of instinct by society or the struggle of freedom and authority. If his work could be reduced to a basic polarity, it would be the polarity of presence and absence that is implied by desire. His work is "about" the elegiac longing (Lorca called it Black Pain) for something toward which language can only gesture:

Song would like to be light.
Song in the dark shows
filaments of phosphorus and moon.
Light doesn't know what it wants.
At its opaline edge
it meets up with itself
and returns.
(translated by Alan S. Trueblood)

Robert Bly has observed that Lorca is always saying "what he wants, what he desires, what barren women desire, what water desires, what Gypsies desire, what a bull desires just before he dies, what brothers and sisters desire." A part of Lorca's appeal is that the object of his desire is never specified. His subject is longing that has no object, no hope of satisfaction, no center. And when the object of desire is most clearly identified—Yerma's longing for a child; Doña Rosita's yearning for her fiancé to return from America—Lorca himself calls attention to its indeterminacy. His work, all of it, is entirely alien to the spirit of carpe diem that Gibson finds in it. For Lorca, there is nothing to seize, nothing to hold fast to, nothing but the ache of desire:

The rose
did not seek the dawn:
almost eternal on its branch,
it looked for something else.

The rose
did not seek to hide or know:
confine of flesh and dream,
it looked for something else.

The rose did not seek the rose:
immobile through the sky,
it looked for something else.
(translated by Edwin Honig)

That "something else" will not be re-

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vealed, ever. What is remarkable about Lorca is that he gestures toward it in a manner that is itself an elegy for absent styles, distant in time or space or foreign to the one he is cultivating. No biographer will decipher the object of his longing, or fully explain his enduring elegy for style.

CHRISTOPHER MAURER is associate professor of Romance languages and literatures at Harvard University, and the editor of a new translation of Lorca's *Poetical Works*.

Do Not Go Gentle

BY IRVING HOWE

Goodnight! by Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky) translated by Richard Lourie

(Viking, 353 pp., $22.95)

"Fantasy is reason's sweetheart," wrote Yuri Olesha, in his brilliant Soviet/anti-Soviet novel *Envy* (1927). A volatile sweetheart, a stormy affair. Olesha's apothegm could also serve as the motto for Andrei Sinyavsky.

Outwardly, Sinyavsky's new novel *Goodnight!* rehearses a familiar sequence of events: his arrest in 1965 for having sent literary texts to the West under the pseudonym Abram Tertz (an unruly Jewish-sounding double), and then, after a faked trial, his seven-year sentence to a labor camp. Beneath this surface of orderly recollection, however, *Goodnight!* follows a more intricate literary program, one that was first sketched in Sinyavsky's caustic essay "On Socialist Realism," which made its American debut in *Dissent* in 1960. Flaring with paradoxes, witticisms, and keen polemics, this essay dismembered the Stalinist literary dogma (really more slogan than dogma) of "socialist realism." Sinyavsky stripped bare the falsities in the use of both the noun and the adjective, ending with a defense of the writer's freedom to employ nonrealistic modes, expressionist, surrealist, fantastic, whatever.

After serving his sentence, Sinyavsky left Russia for Paris, where he has since lived and taught at the Sorbonne. During his years in the camps he managed surreptitiously to compose three books, mailing installments as letters to his wife: studies of Gogol and Pushkin and a mixture of narrative and meditation called *A Voice from the Chorus*, in which the chorus consists of *zeks* (prisoners) spouting idiom and curse, while the voice is Sinyavsky's own, with little essays on literature, God, mankind, whatever came to his fertile mind.

Sinyavsky slips past the usual categories. He is a modernist writer, but in opinion quite traditionalist. He is a serious Christian, but free of the Slavophile zealousness that alloys Solzhenitsyn's faith. He is charmingly liberal in temper, but not at all a dry rationalist. His work pulses with appreciation for the little things of life, and one feels that the years he spent in the camps, far from souring him, made him kindlier in feeling and more open in thought.

Goodnight!, put into racy, idiomatic English by Richard Lourie, breaks into five parts, virtual set pieces zigzagging through time and space. For a reader prepared to do a share of the work, however, it forms a coherent narrative. These divisions are mere framing devices, since within each segment Sinyavsky moves about freely between memory and event, gliding from impression to impression in a semi-free association. The story of his sentence and his imprisonment still retains a strong interest, but what makes *Goodnight!* a notable work of literature is its shimmer of intellect, the constant play of a first-rate mind. Play, and also playfulness: Sinyavsky is really a charmer.

"In prison," he writes, "it's often hard to tell where theater ends and reality begins. . . . I don't think that the universe of prison can be grasped except by projecting its walls into other sources and symbols—those of the theater—the realm of the stage's conventions, inaccessible to us as a tangible reality, and existing only in the form of a writer's fantasies." These "fantasies," with recurrent glances at reason, are grouped into an uncompleted play "The Mirror," parts of which recur in boldface type interspersed in the main narrative—an obbligato of farce set against the realism of memory. Gradually, then, we learn to read Sinyavsky, moving from the narrative to the play, and finding our greatest pleasure in the flow of small notations and insights.

On the very first page Sinyavsky describes his arrest—see how noiselessly, how effortlessly they do it, these virtuoso goons of the secret police. "A ridiculous intellectual, my only thought was how to behave with as much decency and dignity as possible"—but that's precisely what his interrogators, though no longer able to use the good old Stalinist methods of persuasion, are intent upon refusing him. During the first few days of interrogation

> I kept thinking in horror: why are they always laughing. . . . I began to incline toward the view that their primal, uncontrollable laughter—at the sight of extreme confusion in someone who has landed in trouble—also served them as . . . a psychological barrier at a job that is harmful, even dangerous to a living creature who is obligated day after day to engage in a complex, refined psychological cruelty that is contrary to human nature. Children sometimes laugh that way when they are frightened. . . . [And] that laughter serves to plunge the prisoner into an abyss where the authorities are omnipotent and he counts for nothing.

The author of *The House of the Dead* would have relished the acuity of these observations.

His trial over, Sinyavsky gets chummy with Pakhmanov, the prosecutor, who fancies himself a kindly chap. Sinyavsky is briefly taken in, but no, that's a sentimental lapse, and he ventures a keener look: "Oh, don't you believe that your seven-year sentence had wounded Pakhmanov's shaggy heart. Otherwise he wouldn't have been a Lieutenant Colonel for Cases of Special Importance." And meanwhile the wily double, Abram Tertz, has to stick his nose in, berating Sinyavsky:

> Why are you playing the offended party? . . . This is what you were searching for, getting ready for . . . to go under for the last time. You . . . brought it down on yourself with all the fantasy in those stories of yours.

Once in the camp, Sinyavsky wins a moral triumph: he is warmly welcomed by the hardened *zeks*, even though he's one of those good-for-nothing intellectuals. In a moment of tragicomedy, a *zek* asks him: "Hey, Pop, I've got a question for you: I'll believe whatever you say. Will communism come soon? Just give me the word on that? . . ."

Mixing formal and colloquial usage, Sinyavsky's prose speeds along at a pace almost as rapid as the flow of his impres-

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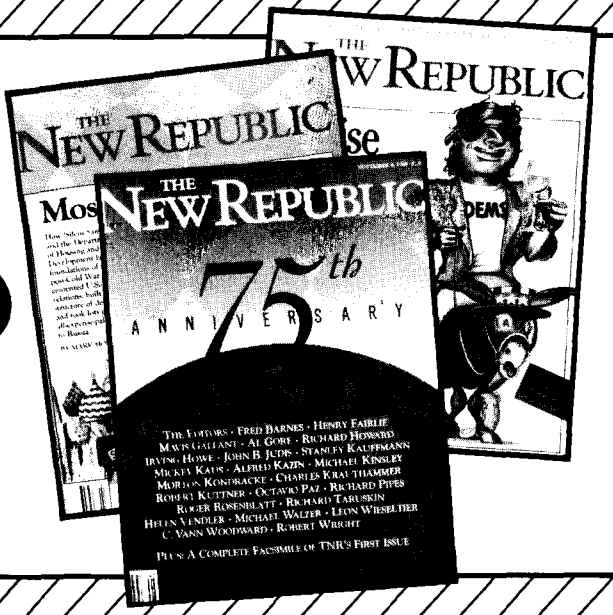

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sions. No sighs of pathos, no bursts of indignation. Look, this is the 20th century, what do you expect in the Stalinist paradise, keep your eyes open, listen hard to the *zeks*, they are masters of the strategy of survival, and see, also, if you can figure out the psychology of your captors. (Many of whom apologize to Sinyavsky, they love him dearly, but he has been so provocative, and so unwilling to cleanse himself through confession, that they really have no choice but to punish him, and one of them, head of the camp's KGB, even weeps each time he put a *zek* in solitary. Oh, those Russians!)

Weaving through this narrative is the play in which a nameless prisoner is interrogated by a nameless "He," a brute who even knows the names of a few Russian writers. "He" accuses the prisoner—it's no joking matter—of taking a "negative attitude" toward Chekhov:

> "Who's your positive hero? Where's your constructive, your, so to speak, caring view of Chekhov? . . . And whose views do you share, Rosenberg's?" "Who's Rosenberg?" "Adolf Hitler's ideologist. . . ." "Are you out of your mind?"

The skit collapses into a chaos of farce, with "He" declaiming: "Put Chekhov out of your mind. He's a trifle, a typo. . . . It's just that you used Chekhov as a cover for your more ambitious plans for Pushkin. Pushkin is what it's all about."

The farcical skit reaches more deeply into the moral nullity of the tormenters than even Sinyavsky's central narrative. An interrogator in the Spanish Inquisition could have been a blind fanatic, and in the Stalinist terror a dulled accomplice, but in post-Stalinist Russia he is merely a hired thug, without a thought in his head, mimicking the absurdities that sent the old Bolsheviks to their death in the Moscow trials. (Zinoviev "covered" for Trotsky and Chekhov "covers" for Pushkin.) And if you still think Sinyavsky's farce too farfetched, remember that Varlam Shalamov, author of the *Kolyma Tales*, perhaps the greatest fiction about the Gulag, spent 17 years as a prisoner because once he had carelessly dropped a word of praise for the émigré Russian writer Ivan Bunin.

The third segment of *Goodnight!* comes as an adagio movement, quieter and sadder than the first two. Sinyavsky's father—tenderly drawn, though with a few spots of humor—was a Left Social Revolutionary, one of those old-style Russian radicals, upright, perhaps a little naive in thought, but committed heart and soul to human betterment:

> My father wanted us to live a life with a "higher meaning," as he used to say, whether that meant Picasso, who was alien to him, or "socialism," "revolution," which had been so generous in settling accounts with him. He thought that what was "higher," "the spirit," did not disappear after death but entered the nebulous sphere of the Will, the vast mind of history . . .

Arrested in 1951, when Stalin ordered a round-up of the aging remnant of SRs, Sinyavsky's father suffered the usual brutalities and then was sent to a place of internal exile. When Sinyavsky went to visit him, the two men retreated to a thick forest where they might talk freely. There Sinyavsky discovered that his father, that man of pure reason and iron will, now believed that "they," the secret police, were tapping his brain through invisible waves. Perhaps, adds the father sadly, it's a mere hallucination, but how can you be sure? Meanwhile, it would be better if his son did not reveal the dangerous activities he is apparently engaged in. "I shouldn't know . . ."

Sinyavsky writes about this encounter with a respectful gravity: "The reality of what happened to [his father] remains a mystery to me." It is a characteristically splendid sentence. Sinyavsky does not psychologize away his father's delusion, if it is a delusion, nor does he transform it into a metaphor of suffering. Everything in that forest is too raw, too real for such commonplace literary maneuvers. There are things in this world that are simply *there*, about which nothing can be said or done except to acknowledge their presence. His admirable father thought the secret police were monitoring his brain? One must listen to him, silently, attentively.

In Solzhenityn's novel *The First Circle* there is an incident—it is not mentioned by Sinyavsky—in which a group of imprisoned scientists works on a device somewhat like that which the old SR imagines. So perhaps he isn't just imagining? In any case, ever since that day with his father in the forest, writes Sinyavsky,

> I've always thought that a writer withdrawing to work and to do some real writing retreats to the forest, so that no one will see him or hear him. With a single idea in mind: "Time to put me on paper," says the forest, becoming a text.

The richest segment of Sinyavsky's new book is its penultimate one, in which the figure of Stalin—feared name, frightful image, messenger of death—makes his appearance. "I'm afraid of writing about him," admits Sinyavsky. Through a series of quickly shifting, nervous vignettes, he summons images of "The Mustache," seeking to evoke not the actual person but the larger-than-life figure that came to pervade Soviet society like a curse of blood. "He loomed like a weighty column whose top reached the ceiling, and which was not made of stone or bronze or any normal material, but of pure coldness, of something like methane or nitrogen reduced to absolute zero."

A climax erupts when a young woman named Alla has a vision of the return of "The Mustache," the ghost of him "who had been trained in a famous monastery" and now "was dredging up the basics. . . . 'Obey me, you sinner, prostrate yourself in the dust! Forgive Stalin and his men their sins!'" Alla replies, memorably:

> "Forgive you on behalf of all the others, the *zeks*? God has not given me that right. . . ." She spoke like a prophetess, one marblelike finger pointed at the forest tundra: "And go round to everyone! One at a time, each in turn. Everyone whose forgiveness you need. The living and the dead. . . . Beseech them in the name of our Lord."

Before this command Stalin's ghost flees. After all, remarks Sinyavsky, "To go to everyone who had been injured by Stalin, that's a real job."

Sinyavsky's magnification of Stalin's terror-image should be paired with the burlesque deflation of "The Mustache" in Vladimir Voinovich's hilarious story "A Circle of Friends" (reprinted in Clarence Brown's *The Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*). Voinovich pictures Stalin and his "boys" of the Politburo as a gang of clowns fooling around at the very moment Hitler is invading Russia. Who is right, Sinyavsky or Voinovich? Both are right: the magnification and the deflation.

The final segment of *Goodnight!* I found troubling. It turns back to 1947, when Sinyavsky was a literature student at Moscow University and still a faithful, if somewhat shaken, young Communist. In this murky—or perhaps deliberately opaque—account, there are two main actors: Seryozha, a gifted but perverse young friend who seems to have stepped right out of Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* and who turns out to be an informer for the KGB, and Helene, daughter of a French naval attaché in Moscow and a student of Slavic literature together with Sinyavsky. The secret police "suggest" to Sinyavsky that he embroil Helene in a "relationship," with the probable goal (explains Lourie in his introduction to *Goodnight!*) of somehow compromising her father.

Repelled yet fearful, the young Sinyavsky submits to the secret police while also telling Helene what has happened. There follow complications that I found

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hard to make out, so convoluted is the narrative and so muffled the narrative voice. Nor was I able to decide whether the trouble is due to an elaborate literary method or to residual feelings of shame; perhaps the former serves to screen the latter. Nothing very terrible results from this imbroglio, and later Helene is apparently the one who smuggles Sinyavsky's manuscripts to the West. But the whole story has a sickly aroma to it, the aroma of a society rutted in paranoia.

For all the virtuosity of its parts, one must still ask about the meaning and the value of *Goodnight!* as a whole. It serves of course as still another glimpse into the wretchedness of the Stalin and post-Stalin years, and it shows that many Russians retained norms of decency. But there is much more. Though outwardly not as grim as, say, Nadezhda Mandelshtam's *Hope Against Hope*, Sinyavsky's novel—we never quite know where fact ends, fiction begins—prompts one to reflect upon the sadness of history.

I have in mind the waste and blood and shattered hopes of our century; the emotions of idealism and impulses to repression that totalitarian ideologies elicited; the imperiousness of will and the willfulness of absolute certainty with which Bolshevism—and not Bolshevism alone—proposed to dictate the shape of history; and then the endless ranks of victims, some of them deluded believers and others mere bystanders, sacrificed upon the altar of the delusion that a "vanguard" possessed a monopoly of truth. But more: there is the final injustice of the historical process itself, the lost voices of the helpless brushed aside or destroyed by the victors. History offers no moral balancing out, no retribution, no ultimate fairness. Whatever may happen today or tomorrow, the dead of the Gulag remain forever dead, the gassed of Auschwitz forever gassed. And behind the playful surface of Sinyavsky's work there is a deep, almost ungraspable sense of this sadness that history yields—a theme never to be fully realized or finally exhausted.

Still, as counterpoint, there is the presence of this man, this lovely writer and nimble intelligence, whose book offers a story of self-creation in circumstances of extreme adversity. What shines through most strongly in *Goodnight!* is this luminous being: a companionate voice, a writer of good feeling. " 'Time to put me on paper,' says the forest, becoming the text."

IRVING HOWE is working on a book about the novel titled *Selected Short Subjects*.

Memory in America

BY DAVID DENBY

The Bellarosa Connection by Saul Bellow

(Penguin, 102 pp., $6.95)

A Theft by Saul Bellow

(Penguin, 109 pp., $6.95)

"In these democratic times, whether you are conscious of it or not, you are continually in quest of higher types." So says the narrator of Saul Bellow's new novella, *The Bellarosa Connection*. An elderly expert in memory training, a professional sorter of old impressions, the nameless narrator is at the point of taking stock of his life, his relations, his allegiances. He's engaged, therefore, in an activity close to the making of fiction, and in this business of "higher types" he probably speaks for Bellow. In his recent stories and novellas, Bellow seems eager to be impressed—to be bowled over, really—by the men and women he puts before us. He celebrates the quality that lasts—not breeding in the social sense, but what used to be called "character," something found equally in a Viennese au pair girl and a distant relative dying obscurely in New Jersey. Greatness in ordinary human form.

Like the gold coins once poured on the heads of newly crowned czars, Bellow's praise now falls without irony on intellectuals making their way in our amiably philistine business civilization. One encounters such extraordinary examples of winged sapience as the aging, disabled, but eagle-proud art critic and aesthetic philosopher Victor Wulpy (clearly based on Harold Rosenberg), who dominates the novella "What Kind of a Day Did You Have?" (included in Bellow's 1984 collection of short fiction, *Him with His Foot in His Mouth*). And in the same collection (it is one of Bellow's best books) appears the fierce young Chicago-born Zetland (a.k.a. Isaac Rosenfeld), writer and bohemian, devouring Melville in darkened, cavelike apartments. Unlike Henderson or Herzog or Citrine, these men are never foolish in their spiritual striving.

Generosity in brilliant old men is sufficiently rare that one wonders: Is this longing for human distinction in Bellow's late fiction a needed comfort, an extra log on the fire as the day grows colder and turns into night? Has there been a softening of his gaze? And does his giving vein have any necessary connection with the form of these long stories? These fictions are not concise and fiercely organized, like *Seize the Day* or some of the shorter pieces in *Mosby's Memoirs*, but contemplative and digressive, spilling over with lists and categories and ideas, a sort of roiled Whitmanesque landscape of the American mind.

I hasten to add that women, highly intelligent though not exactly intellectuals, come in for their share of the tumbling gold. This is a new turn for Bellow, and sometimes he's not quite in control of the shower of praise. The novella *A Theft* nearly founders under the weight of Bellow's heaped-up encomiums of his heroine Clara Velde. A bustling, worldly figure, Clara works as a fashion-magazine executive and lives on Park Avenue with her fourth husband. For more than two decades, however, she has loved the fabulous Ithiel Regler—Teddy Regler, with his "eyes from Greek mythology," who serves as globe-trotting adviser to Presidents and Shahs, an original deep thinker who has the ability to put the big picture together. A bit of a hyped article, this Teddy. He comes off as half talk-show guest, half Richard Goodwin's fantasy of himself.

As for Clara, she is handsome and blond, and her big-boned body is topped with a capacious noggin—she "needed that [big] head; a mind like hers demanded space." Born back-country in the Midwest and raised on the Bible, she now exudes smarts and taste ("She bought her clothes in the best shops and was knowledgeable about cosmetics"). Yet somehow she's romantic and impulsive too, a woman driven by loyalty and honor. Bellow compares her to a medieval heroine, to a Renaissance

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heroine—he keeps upping the ante.

Clara recognizes a fellow woman of honor in her au pair girl Gina, an amazingly self-possessed Viennese slumming in New York. Gina's disreputable Haitian boyfriend steals a ring that Teddy Regler had given Clara years earlier, and Clara's nobility expands in many remarkable acts of trust. Despite much descriptive energy and charm, the tale strains one's patience. Bellow resorts to such awkward narrative devices as a Chinese-American dressmaker-confidante who gets to hear Clara's racy and intimate speculations. He displays an alarmingly smooth knowingness about the details of Park Avenue domestic management. The book might have been written by a social secretary of remarkable, and remarkably obsequious, observational powers; Bellow's eager new sophistication fits badly with the highfalutin, morally strenuous tone of the exchanges between Clara and Gina.

The restricted, even smug, social circumstances of the story, moreover, reveal the limits of his generosity, which is reserved for a small circle of cultivated whites, while servants and menacing outsiders of varying hues hover in the background. *A Theft* is a rare case of class boundaries limiting Bellow's consciousness. Though witty from one sentence to the next, the tale lacks humor and proportion, and suffers overall from an atmosphere of strained triviality. The irony of a noble character triumphing in such worldy and gilded circumstances doesn't come through with any force. Clara has clearly been oversold; we're in danger, much of the time, of not caring about her, big head and all.

But no such troubles should mar anyone's enjoyment of *The Bellarosa Connection*, a seriously funny *jeu d'esprit* of Bellow's old age. The narrator is a masterful man—the millionaire founder of the Mnemosyne Institute of Philadelphia, which trains businessmen and statesmen in memory use. A retired widower, long cut off from his New Jersey roots, he roams around his 20-room Main Line mansion, both flattered and oppressed by his own powers. He may long to "forget about remembering," but he knows that the only retirement from memory is death. In himself, he is not a memorable or lovable Bellow character. Highly intelligent, he's neutral in temperament, disconnected from life, the practitioner of a hollow craft (brute memorization) that leaves him vulnerable to emotions drifting below the level of conscious recall. But this time Bellow is in control. He plants a small bomb beneath the surface of the narrator's suave self-sufficiency.

Plagued by a sense of isolation, the narrator recalls his strong-souled New Jersey relatives Harry and Sorella Fonstein, whom he hasn't seen in years. He has allowed this connection with the admirable but unfashionable Fonsteins to lapse in part because he can remember them so well; memory has substituted for experience. He also let it lapse because the Fonsteins were something of a threat. As a youth, the narrator's own father had compared him unfavorably to Fonstein, a "gimpy Galitzianer"—he has a bum foot and wears an orthopedic shoe—who had fled from Hitler, suffered, and survived. While the memory expert and nascent millionaire, then a languid American Jew, was living in bohemian indolence in Greenwich Village, Fonstein made his way to America and became a rich man himself, largely due to the entrepreneurial skill of his wife, Sorella.

It is Sorella in her lifelong struggle for her husband's dignity who receives Bellow's extraordinary appreciation—all the more extraordinary for being grounded so firmly in sexual disgust. The narrator's first impression of her borders on the ludicrous:

> Sorella Fonstein sometimes sat on the sofa, which had a transparent zippered plastic cover. Sorella was a New Jersey girl—correction: lady. She was very heavy and she wore makeup. Her cheeks were downy. Her hair was done up in a beehive. A pince-nez, highly unusual, a deliberate disguise, gave her a theatrical air. She was still a novice then, trying on these props. Her aim was to achieve an authoritative, declarative manner. However, she was no fool.

Bellow's short sentences, however tough and definitive, never turn into a form of appropriation. He's not omnivorous, like Updike; the surfaces of whatever he's describing remain hard, resistant, rooted in the world, sitting on zippered plastic. He comes at the object in a rush, slyly generous, so eager to be impressed, and makes a quick, darting pass. Then he comes back and makes another pass. The method is accumulative, the perceptions renewed, revised, restated, reaffirmed. The narrator fixes Sorella in his mind at different stages of her life, and she grows, in all her dismaying bulk and pretension, into an increasingly bold and dignified figure. Sorella "made you look twice at a doorway. When she came to it, she filled the space like a freighter in a canal lock." Yet this cargo vessel made a good marriage, converted humiliation into strength. Rather than being a "merely square fat lady from the dark night of petty-bourgeois New Jersey," she was, in fact, "a spirited woman, at home with ideas." So armed, Sorella goes into battle for her husband.

The central anecdote of the story, one of Bellow's funniest ideas, seems farfetched at first, but its eccentricity yields a surprising richness of thematic association. Having fled from Poland to Italy at the outbreak of the war, Fonstein was arrested by the fascist police and was about to be turned over to the S.S. Whereupon he was freed from an Italian prison by none other than Billy Rose. Billy Rose, the producer? Yes, the very same: Broadway Billy, husband of Fanny Brice, stager of pageants and patriotic Aquacades, art collector, Jewish entrepreneur and sexual fool, with a talent for humiliation at the hands of giggling chorus girls. Billy Rose had used his money and his mob connections in Italy to save a number of Jews. Italians working for him announced that they were coming from "Bellarosa."

After spending the remainder of the war in Cuba, Fonstein entered the United States, married Sorella, and for years tried to express his gratitude to Billy. Rose, however, refused to see him or acknowledge him in any way. But Sorella, who talks of the Holocaust constantly (oppressing the narrator with her knowledge), will not accept Billy's decision. The drama of the story, and nothing less than the situation of the Jews in America, unfolds from Billy's inexplicable stubbornness.

Portraiture in Bellow's work is always witty, a natural exercise of the muscular vivacity of his mind. He cannot write a dull or humorless account of any human being, and his description of Billy—an up-from-the-gutter Jewish boy observed by another Jewish boy with unillusioned wonder—turns into a dramatic debate between disgust and amazement:

> There was a penny-arcade jingle about Billy, the popping of shooting galleries, the weak human cry of the Times Square geckos, the lizard gaze of sideshow freaks. To see him as he was, you have to place him against the whitewash glare of Broadway in the wee hours. But even such places have their grandees—people whose defects can be converted to seed money for enterprises. There's nothing in this country that you can't sell, nothing too weird to bring to market and found a fortune on. And once you got as much major real estate as Billy had, then it didn't matter that you were one of the human deer that came uptown from the Lower East Side to graze on greasy sandwich papers. Billy? Well, Billy had bluffed out mad giants like Robert Moses. He bought the Ziegfeld building for peanuts. He installed Eleanor Holm in a mansion and hung the walls with masterpieces.

Only an American could have written

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this extraordinary passage, and perhaps only Americans can understand it. Bellow goes well past the amused distaste of a cultivated Jew who doesn't need to be awed by Billy Rose's money. Billy, as Bellow develops the character, may be nasty, self-justifying, greedy, vain, dishonest, status-obsessed—a worm. And yet, and yet . . . Big money and big success can never be entirely ludicrous. Or *merely* ludicrous. The passage expresses a rueful acceptance of the vitality and the power of vulgarity.

Like God leading Israel out of Egypt, Billy committed an act of rescue. But then, eager to escape the "Jewish blues," he turned away from the objects of his beneficence; he escapes into deals, publicity, an art collection, women. He's the assimilated American Jew as clown, a shrewd man nevertheless driven to humble himself before slender, Palmolive chorus girls who undress for him and then taunt his "unheroic privates." This man seeking humiliation wouldn't dream of sitting down for ten minutes with a fellow Jew. According to the celebrity caste system Billy lives by, Fonstein is an untouchable. Anyway, having received help once, Fonstein might ask for it again. He might think he had a claim to it.

The elements of the Billy Rose rescue operation are concocted, I assume, out of rumor and hearsay enlarged by ironic fantasy. In any case, the reality of these events is not at issue, only their value as American myth. What could Billy's decision mean? And why pursue him to change it? Of all possible failures of the spirit, the refusal to accept gratitude hardly seems one of the worst. Bellow doesn't spell out the significance of it, but Sorella's solemn persistence points the way. A man who refuses gratitude won't acknowledge a bond with another human being—as if having given someone something, you've soiled your hands on him, and he's become a lesser being forever. To a woman of such outsized pride, the slight is repellent in its implications.

At the peak of her audacity, Sorella threatens to blackmail Billy into meeting her husband by dangling before him some compromising journals that have fallen into her possession, journals that form a record of Billy's sexual activities and business dealings, his humiliations and defeats. This time his refusal attains the level of outraged principle. "Even a geek," he exclaims, "has his human rights." Thus speaks democratic man. But there's some grandeur in his stubbornness. What famous man would not lose heart at the thought of *that* kind of public exposure?

The comedy of *The Bellarosa Connection* is generated precisely by its improbability, the forced yoking of this extreme of American-Jewish shallowness with a woman so powerfully representing the moral sorrows of the ages. One wonders, however, if Bellow hasn't forced himself to suppress all criticism of his heroine. Blackmail, even blackmail of a worm, is a low and desperate act, a use of memory as vengeance. Yet Bellow speaks only of Sorella's courage and resourcefulness. In other ways, it is a familiar face-off, another of Bellow's confrontations between intellectuals and gangsters, between mind and will (with the latter usually gaining the advantage). In this case, each Jew is a negation of the other. The struggle, as the narrator remembers it, ends in victory for Billy. Refused again, the Fonsteins disappear into the rest of their lives.

In his recent short fiction, Bellow has perfected a method of narrative suspension in which an entire life is encompassed, through expansion and digression, in a day or two of time. He packs the richness and the jostling philosophical ambition of a novel into these stories. In "What Kind of a Day Did You Have?" Victor Wulpy, shaken by loneliness, summons his lovable bourgeois mistress Katrina Wolliger, who lives in Chicago, to meet him in Buffalo, so that she can fly back with him to Chicago, where he has to give a lecture to some corporate executives. Together they endure a bruising, jangled American travel day, filled with odd encounters and fragmentary conversations in airplanes, hotels, bars, and restaurants. Arrogant Victor is nearing the end, but there's no dying fall here; his life, despite all its physical difficulties, continues at its long-sustained zenith. Victor suffers a spasm of loneliness, but not of weakness. The story overflows with an emotion scarcely imaginable in our clownishly self-deprecatory media society: true intellectual pride.

Bellow's habits of suspension almost enforce prolonged savoring of "higher types" (and higher lower types, like Billy). In *The Bellarosa Connection*, the narrator's pleasure in telling the strange story is part of the engaging sideways movement of the piece. He keeps coming back to the oddity of his material, recasting it, turning it this way and that.

The failure of the Fonstein-Billy connection, it turns out, is an intensified version of the generally botched or broken connections among Jews in America. In "Cousins" (also from *Him with His Foot in His Mouth*), Bellow's narrator announces, "I absolutely agree with Hegel (lectures at Jena, 1806) that the whole mass of ideas that have been current until now, 'the very bonds of the world,' are dissolving and collapsing like a vision in a dream." Hegel undoubtedly meant the end of feudal and religious bonds, but Bellow stretches it to include the dissolution of sustained relations, the development in its place of the awful American isolation ("individualism"). More is at fault than inadequate sociability: America drives people apart and makes them trivial, too. "The pursuit of loneliness," as Philip Slater called it.

In *The Bellarosa Connection*, the Old World Jews (and Sorella, generically, is one of them), brought up in grief, can never give up their obsession with dignity and obligation, while the New World Jews are moving too fast to allow themselves to be hindered by any claims at all. The memory expert and his Philadelphia-socialite wife found the Fonsteins depressing; Sorella's harping on the details of the Holocaust implant-

Notes for an Epigram

Heraclitus, whose work comes down to us in tatters,
Mere fragments preserved in the works of other authors,
Is said to have believed that there is no truth
But yields, sufficiently considered, to broader definition;
And thus the entire history of Western Thought,
That elaborate edifice assembled brick by brick,
That symmetrical and heavily-fortified construct
Founded finally on air, might be said to be
A refutation of the empirical relativism of Heraclitus,
Though today's Analytical Philosophy says something very like.
O most fortunate Heraclitus! Of whose wisdom
The pearls alone are remembered, and who now,
After some reflection, even appears to be right.

GEORGE BRADLEY

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ed information that would remain in the narrator's memory for life. He doesn't want to hear this stuff, any more than does Billy Rose, whom Bellow associates with George Washington, the American Adam himself, advising against "entangling alliances." The narrator drops the Fonsteins, and when he tries to find them years later, he discovers that other mutual relatives have also lost track of them.

Depressed, he has a nightmare that reveals to him the tenuousness of civilized life. As a protected American, he could not understand, as the Fonsteins certainly did, the inescapable nature of merciless brutality. Yet he can't discuss this with anyone but *them*. A fitting punishment. He is not, it turns out, like a novelist. A professional of recall, he has developed methods of retrieving information in functional, neutral chains; he has divorced memory from meaning, never understanding (until it is too late) the purpose of memory. The end of his life is haunted by this woman whose memories never escape meaning.

The final pages are a little rushed; the ironies are jammed together too harshly. But this eccentric story has a surprising force. Earlier Sorella had said, "The Jews could survive everything that Europe threw at them. I mean the lucky remnant. But now comes the next test—America. Can they hold their ground, or will the U.S.A. be too much for them?" The answer, in this story at least, is yes, it's too much. Realizing too late the meaning of his recollections of the Fonsteins, the memory expert asks God to remember them.

Several critics have suggested that Bellow's last two novels, *The Dean's December* and *More Die of Heartbreak*, have marked a falling off in his old age. *The Bellarosa Connection*, however, is a classic Bellow story. The rush of short declarative sentences—thought-tormented yet exuberant—produce a familiar excitement. Reading Bellow, one feels that he is writing at peril, as if he were going so hard and so fast that he would fly off the curve of his own momentum. At times, I have stopped myself from reading, anxiously wondering if he can possibly sustain the breakneck tempo. His mind is utterly exposed—there's no syntactical padding, none of the gracious furniture, the turnings, pauses, strategically placed pit stops for rest and regeneration shrewdly planted in a beautifully written long sentence.

A long sentence connects the world. Short sentences, normally, break it up. But such is Bellow's power for consecutive and multifaceted representation that he gives us a greater sense that the world is still *there* than anyone writing fiction in America. My question about age softening Bellow's responses to character now seems demeaning. He is generous because he is naive enough to write stories as if the world had some solidity, as if the words used to describe it still had some reference to courage and betrayal and the inescapable burden of human obligation. He remains an unfashionable great writer, a maximalist.

DAVID DENBY is the movie critic for *New York* magazine.

Vertigo

BY JOSEPH NOCERA

Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class by Barbara Ehrenreich

(Pantheon, 292 pp., $18.95)

The great American middle class—by which Barbara Ehrenreich means, more narrowly, the professional class: the people who write software and drive BMWs, who teach in universities and wear penny loafers, who shuffle paper in New York and drop $100 at lunch (charged to the expense account, of course)—this middle class does not give up its inner secrets easily. This class is aware, intelligent, educated, and informed. But it is also seriously repressed, with only the vaguest self-awareness about why it acts in the ways it does.

Why does it—or rather, why do we—curse credit cards even as we call Citibank to request an expansion of our credit lines? Why do more of us derive pleasure in one kind of employment—advertising, or journalism, or staffing a Congressional committee—than in another, like managing a corporate subsidiary in Des Moines? Why do we find the lines of a Mazda Miata more appealing than the lines of a Pontiac Grand Am? Why can't we save money? Despite millions of dollars spent on such predictive tools as marketing research, we haven't a clue.

The middle class is hardly alone, of course, in its inability to explain itself. All large groups or classes display an unarticulated, lemming-like behavior when it comes to trends and tastes that flash through the culture. High-end, $150 sneakers are currently the coveted badge of status in the ghetto. Can anyone explain why? And did the organization man, the ultimate symbol of the middle class 30 years ago, truly understand what drew him to the organization, and to the suburbs, and to the Oldsmobile?

It would have been the rare organization man who would have even perceived the pattern, at least before William Whyte arrived to explain it in *The Organization Man*. A little later Vance Packard began a nice living by enlarging on Whyte's accomplishment; in book after book, Packard pointed out trends and values that were fairly obvious, except that we were too obtuse to notice them. A popularizer like Packard was needed to lift the curtain.

Though she probably doesn't see it quite this way, Ehrenreich has written a book that makes her as much the heir to Packard and Whyte as the yuppie is the heir to the organization man. She, too, wishes to understand and explain middle-class behavior, though this is a vastly more complicated business than it used to be. Merely pointing out the behavioral characteristics of the modern middle class doesn't cut it anymore; that sort of sociology has become the stuff of Living Sections all over the country. Is there anyone who doesn't know that yuppies consume egregiously? That restaurants have become the opiate of the middle class? That "downward mobility" is now the mantra of former 1960s radicals? That America is filled with corporate lawyers who hate their jobs but don't have the nerve to quit?

These are among Ehrenreich's touchstones. She means to put the middle class on the couch, to divulge its "inner life," as the subtitle of her book suggests. And, up to a point, she succeeds. She is perceptive in her analysis of the motives and the mores of the professional class that came before her and those who came after her, of her parents' generation and of the yuppies. What she is less successful in penetrating is the psyche of the professional class that grew out of her own generation, the 1960s generation.

Self-analysis is never easy. A committed leftist, Ehrenreich brings to her book

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assumptions that came out of her formative experience of the 1960s. Because she neglects to examine these views—not just of politics, but also of the nature of work and the purpose of money—she overlooks an essential part of the psychic evolution of the professional class. Thus the key link is skewed in her argument; she usefully exposes the anxiety that has lurked beneath the ostensible stability of the professional class in her discussions of the 1950s and the 1980s, but in explaining the transition between those generations she invokes not insecurity, but treason. She blames the sellouts of the glorious 1960s for the materialism around us. It's a lament distorted by anger, which obscures precisely what the rest of her analysis persuasively reveals: the powerful social, cultural, and economic consequences of anxiety.

Ehrenreich understands that the insecurity of the American professional class is one of the hidden themes of the postwar age. We can vividly see that insecurity now, of course, at the end of the ridiculous 1980s. The widening gap between rich and poor—the whittling away of the true middle class—has been one of the hallmarks of this decade, and its legacy is anxiety. At its baldest and most primal, that insecurity means cringing at the truly desperate—the homeless, say—and scrambling desperately to join the rising rich.

A second level of insecurity is also obvious now. It is status anxiety: the fear of falling within the middle class, as opposed to falling out of it entirely. Thirty years ago or so, the prediction was that status distinctions in America would gradually evaporate, especially with the rise of the great leveler, television. Just the opposite, of course, has happened: gradations within the middle class have become far more important than they used to be, and those gradations are measured largely in terms of taste. We have become, as a nation, far more snobbish than we were a generation ago: about the kinds of clothes we wear, the kinds of cars we drive, even the kinds of pens we use.

Without question, the yuppie consumption we see all around us has been fueled by The New Snobbery. But yuppies are merely the ripest, most obvious targets. Most of us feel to some degree the inchoate need to differentiate ourselves from the masses, an insecurity that "upscale" manufacturers have exploited brilliantly. This is not something that the professional class admits easily to itself, and so it couches its desires in terms of "quality" or "value." At the same time, the small handful of American institutions that have continued to cling to the idea of a "classless" America—Sears springs immediately to mind—have fallen on hard times.

There is rich irony in all of this, and Ehrenreich appreciates it. Middle-class "necessities," she is quick to point out, often now include items that were once considered luxuries: private school tuition, a summer cottage, and so on. And she also notes correctly that

> in a previous generation, a young couple who lacked the money for a house and other family-oriented purchases would simply have skipped the raspberry vinegar . . . and saved their pennies. Spending was the reward for saving; and "leisure products," which include all the yuppie favorites, took second place to the moral solidity represented by a house and heavy appliances.

Her book is filled with other cultural insights, many of them small and glancing, but rewarding just the same. "It may have been the automatic washing machine, as much as anything, that allowed middle-class parents to overcome their traditional obsession with cleanliness and postpone toilet training into the second year," she writes acutely about evolving child-rearing methods, forgetting only to mention the importance of disposable diapers. And elsewhere: "As the urban middle-class withdraws from public spaces and services—schools, parks, mass transportation—it also withdraws political support for public spending designed to benefit the community as a whole"—a sentence that explains, better than any federal study, the decline of the public school system.

Ehrenreich's larger point is that the insecurity of the professional-class is not a recent phenomenon, even though it may seem that way to us. "Keeping up with the Joneses," after all, was not a phrase coined in the 1980s; middle-class insecurity, including status anxiety, has been a part of the postwar psyche. She shows that at every step there was always something lurking under the surface pleasantness of daily life to make the middle class jittery: the fear of juvenile delinquency in the 1950s (supposedly brought on by postwar affluence and "permissive" parenting); the "discovery" of poverty in the early 1960s (where did *they* come from?); the student rebellion a few years later; and so on.

Ehrenreich dwells quite properly on the rise of the meritocracy, which was, and remains, the greatest of all the generators of professional-class insecurity. As she points out, the creation of "the professions" was designed as much to keep people out as to let them in, with each generation forced to fight for admission to the club. Unlike the truly wealthy, who could guarantee that their children would also be wealthy, a doctor could not guarantee that his or her child would be a doctor, or even that the child would wind up a member of the professional class.

The desire to succeed induced insecurity in the parents and their children. (Still, professional-class parents became even more insecure when, in the late 1960s, their children decided to eschew the traditional vision of "success" in favor of, say, making tie-dye T-shirts.) The middle class, she sums up, "is afraid, like any class below the most securely wealthy, of misfortunes that might lead to a downward slide. But in the middle class there is another anxiety: a fear of inner weakness, of growing soft, of failing to strive, of losing discipline and will." That added fear means perpetual anxiety: "Even the affluence that is so often the goal of all this striving becomes a threat, for it holds out the possibility of hedonism and self-indulgence."

But there was, according to Ehrenreich, a golden age, when the professional class escaped this trap. It was all too fleeting. During the 1960s, in her version of events, everyone who is now a member in good standing of the professional class was fired with radical rhetoric and rage at the establishment, like she was. It was a noble effort to "put aside the gloom of history and live, at last, in full freedom and genuine equality." All those who have become corporate flunkies since then, by her account, have sold their souls to the devil. That there were plenty of future professional-class members 20 years ago who went to church regularly, were conservative, opposed abortion, and so on doesn't seem to cross her mind. Nor does the possibility that any member of the professional class who was on the barricades could have made a well-thought-out turn in a different direction, that some people simply got tired of trying to save the world. In her version, it is a matter of conscious treason.

Yet there are other ways to understand the evolution of middle-class interest, and particularly of her generation's interest, in money and material things. America is a relentlessly materialistic country. It is culturally and historically implausible to imagine that the anti-materialists of the 1960s could resist forever: that they wouldn't conclude at some point that, well, maybe a little materialism wasn't such a bad thing after all. Once they started having children of their own, certainly, it wasn't surprising that they would think that maybe their parents hadn't been so stupid to want the

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nice house and the two cars and the house near the neighborhood school.

This turning point can be dated to the late 1970s and early 1980s, far enough from the 1960s that these new consumers no longer felt self-conscious about buying. Most important, the emerging materialism was prodded along by raging inflation. Inflation was a huge psychological factor—Ehrenreich never mentions it—that brought habits of spending and saving that are with us still, and that served to create a very deep anxiety in the professional class. The deepest, in fact: inflation meant the professional class was visibly falling back, which is what it dreaded more than anything else. Inflation made people who had never cared about money suddenly care about it (they were suckers if they didn't). Inflation made people who didn't own homes envious of those who did. Inflation drove people to buy right now, since everything would be more expensive tomorrow.

But when inflation was finally tamed, the buying didn't stop, and neither did the caring about money and material things. There was no turning back. We had discovered (to our surprise, perhaps?) that we liked buying things, that we were every bit as materialistic as our parents had been. And so spending became first a giant game of catch-up, and then a sport, and then the slightly sick national pastime it is today, fueled as it is now, not by inflation but by status anxiety.

That status anxiety, accompanied now by an obsession with "downward mobility," in turn reflects another, more prosaic economic fact than Ehrenreich admits. Her generation, extremely dubious about the merits of capitalism, chose to turn its back on precisely the kind of work that had provided their parents' affluence. In the 1960s business was corrupt, remember? Businessmen were Babbitts or worse. Corporations were faceless, insensitive, "exploitative," merchants of death. To work for such entities was to join the ranks of the soulless. Many of these ideas had long been held by the American intelligentsia, which has historically looked down its nose at businessmen, but suddenly they were being embraced by a very large swath of young people just about to enter the job market.

At the same time, these potential new members of the professional class instinctively adopted another idea about work that was foreign to their parents, who assumed that the main point of having a job was to provide a "lifestyle": the house in the suburbs, the new car, the pleasant family life. Whether the job itself provided a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment was practically irrelevant. (Maybe that's why the after-work martini was such a symbol of professional life 30 years ago.)

For their children, however, work was suddenly expected to bring pleasure, to become a source of fulfillment, to provide a sense of worth. Going to work became nearly an act of narcissism. Happily, there were plenty of professional-class jobs that provided pleasure and were deemed appropriately anti-establishment. (A capitalist might see this, too, as a function of supply and demand.) There were the burgeoning social service bureaucracies. There was journalism. There was "good-guy" lawyering. There was social work, and other "caring professions." None of these jobs paid particularly well, but who cared about that? Who even thought about that at the time? The point of the exercise was to save the world, and to gain some personal fulfillment. It was certainly not to make money.

Thus the connection between work and money became blurred. Though no one realized it at the time—though not many realize it even today—that was the great luxury that our parents' affluence afforded us. And thus another of those wonderful ironies: it was the fact of our parents' money that allowed us to start down our career paths without giving a thought to our own financial future.

And then what happened? Two things. First, the idea of saving the world began to lose its luster. Regional planning (another of Ehrenreich's favorite jobs) turned out to be just another form of paper-shuffling. Bureaucracies were, well, bureaucratic. Young idealistic journalists quickly latched on to the long-held values of the profession, which were very much in opposition to the values that had led them to journalism in the first place. Social workers and good-guy lawyers burned out. And so on.

Then, as the young professional class grew a little older, had some children, changed its views about houses, cars, suburbia, etc.—as it began to care more about money, in other words—it gradually realized that money was the one thing it didn't have enough of. But almost none of these people saw that the career decisions they had made ten years before had led directly to their predicament. They simply assumed that because they were now in their 30s and wanted more money, the jobs they held should provide more money. It was, it is, an extremely unrealistic view of the world; but out of that view came the large reservoir of self-pity that is now so evident.

"Work," writes Ehrenreich, "is the secret hedonism of the middle class, its alternative to the less satisfying, and hence more addictive hedonism of the consumer culture." She's right about that, of course. Her solution to breaking the addictive hold of consumer culture is to reembrace the notion that work is its own form of pleasure, that it can provide a kind of inner fulfillment that a Miata can't. It's a persuasive prescription, except that Ehrenreich still insists that the only jobs worth having are in social work, and regional planning, and "the caring professions." She still sneers at businessmen, still views corporate employment as "servitude" and entrepreneurship as "self-seeking."

It's a blind spot in an otherwise perceptive analysis. For here is something else we can see now, or at least most of us can. Ehrenreich's anti-business bias—the anti-business bias of the 1960s—was itself a form of snobbery, as deleterious as the yuppie consumption she is so quick to condemn. Looking back now, it's hard to say for sure which is worse. Consumption mania has probably been worse for the soul, but surely the fact that the better part of a generation turned its back on business is one of the reasons for the decline of America's place in the world economy.

JOSEPH NOCERA is a columnist for *Esquire*.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

Profitable programming

To the editors:

The Washington Diarist is missing a significant piece of Americana ("Troubling Questions," December 11). A closer look at U.S. television would show that the British sheep dog trials are not as boring as the golf matches shown here. But most Americans *pay* for programming that is often as good as or better than PBS. Cable news channels and public affairs programming are more than mere alternatives to newspapers. Nature programs can actually be aimed at intelligent adults. Documentaries cover not only mundane topics but some that are well beyond the normal imagination (has the Diarist ever seem "Mondo Beyondo"?). For sheer utilitarian timeliness, nothing matches the Weather Channel.

Excellence in television may well stem from state support, insulation from competition, and cultural elitism. It can also result from some crass capitalist who simply wants to make a buck by giving people what they want.

NORMA R. FRANK
Merion Station, Pennsylvania

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VIENNA DIARIST

Hapsburg burg

VIENNA IS AN ASTONISHINGLY beautiful city, its complex and cosmopolitan history emblazoned on its gorgeous facades. Still, many Viennese are (with reason) apologetic about their past, and the present does not give them much respite. Their president, after all, is one Kurt Waldheim, denizen of the "watch list" of the Immigration Service of the U.S. Department of Justice. Other countries he'd like to visit don't formally bar him, they just don't invite him. So he has to settle for the least discriminating hosts. Last week, for example, the European papers were full of photographs of him in Tunis in warm embrace with Yasir Arafat, an old comrade. This is not how Waldheim expected to spend his twilight years. You'd think that even Arafat might know that Waldheim can no longer advance the PLO cause. But then, Arafat's political ancestors fondly called Hitler "Abu Ali" and shouted his slogans in the streets of Arab cities. The truth is that Waldheim is the president of Austria in name only. His calendar is empty. No one of consequence really cares what he thinks. No one asks his advice. Guests condition their appearances—at the Salzburg festival, for instance—on guarantees that he won't even appear in the audience.

WALDHEIM REMINDS THE AUSTRIans of the nightmare from which they are trying to awake. One reason it's so hard for them to do so is that they have never quite admitted to the reality of the Austrian enmeshment with Nazism. It's an old saw, repeated to you by many Austrians themselves: with the connivance of the Western occupying powers after the war, the Austrians succeeded in depicting themselves not as Hitler's most willing allies but as his first victims. Or as someone put it to us, citing Konrad Adenauer's wisdom, the Austrians persuaded the victors that Hitler was a German and Beethoven an Austrian. Of course, much of this history is now moot. The European Jews are dead, almost all of them. And even Vienna, grand Vienna, seems to be the last stop on the railway.

THE EVENTS IN CENTRAL AND Eastern Europe already show signs of changing all that. Vienna may, in fact, be the gateway to where history is being once again written in capital letters. The Austrians certainly have a leg up on dealing with their neighbors and with the Russians, too. I don't just mean direct trade or, for that matter, brokerage—although these have given Vienna business folk a certain brashness about their centrality that has already attracted the Japanese. (I can't remember which of the Tokyo zillionaire corporations owns the Café Mozart. Yes, the Café Mozart, which is never as crowded as the Russian Tea Room.) Already in the 1950s the Austrians navigated their way to independence, which meant the troops of the four powers would go. One price they paid was permitting the erection in the Schwarzenbergplatz of a muscly memorial to the Soviet soldiers. But as a very savvy Viennese told us, "Better one stone Russian soldier than 30,000 live ones." Of course, the Russians did retain some residual sway over Vienna. But if the Foreign Ministry was sometimes a bit craven before Moscow, some of Vienna's more eminent citizens were not. Among the most active of these citizens were some titled nobles, whose status is shadowy and ambivalent under Austrian law. It is they, however, who crossed and recrossed the borders to strengthen the will of the dissidents under Communist rule. Were these aristocrats emboldened by noblesse oblige or by a sense of invulnerability? Whatever the explanation, the ties between Austria and some of the countries of the Warsaw Pact are natural and organic: the Hapsburgs governed vast territories, stretching almost to Asia Minor. So when the Czechs finally were permitted by the disintegrating Communist regime to go where they chose, they came to Vienna, some of them as if returning home. And though they were driving their Czech-made Skoda cars, the last really substantial evocation of their long-ago industrial prowess, they gawked at even the most trivial trinkets of capitalism. One thing is clear: the ten days that just shook the world from Prague and Bratislava is not about socialism with a human face. Eric Breindel was surely right when he argued in his syndicated column that Alexander Dubček's tumultuous reception at one of those mammoth rallies of the opposition was more a symbolic tribute to a brave man than a sign that the Czech people retain any lingering loyalties to socialism.

THE UNBRIDLED ENTHUSIASM FOR free market capitalism, bound in due course to cause some disenchantments, is one element of European integration. But here, there, and everywhere, particularly in parts of the map that used to be colored red, there are more and more signs of crackup along ethnic and national lines—as in Soviet Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and other places one has been hazy about. I am embarrassed to admit that I used to think Moldavia the setting of an operetta by Franz Lehár. Well, the Moldavians, who used to be called Bessarabians, have been kicking up their own fuss for autonomy in the Soviet Union. And Nicolae Ceausescu has tried to remind the world that Moldavia, which used to be part of Romania, is part of the U.S.S.R. only because of the secret agreements between Hitler and Stalin that so enlarged the Soviet imperium. The world is not disposed to listen to tyrant Ceausescu's proddings. But Lithuania's are understandably harder to ignore.

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO imagine that what the future holds is some form of *gemütlich* old Mitteleuropa, a historical fantasy itself. One vision that horrifies the Austrians is what is already happening in Yugoslavia. In retrospect Yugoslavia might no more have been one country than was Lebanon. Communist rule in Yugoslavia under Marshal Tito was also the rule of the Serbians. Now that the centralized sway of the Party has become a thing of the past, the intrinsic and near-ancient tensions among Serbs, Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, Macedonians, and various others are the stuff of people's political passions. Religion feeds the hatreds or, to put it more mildly, magnifies the differences. In any case, the ethnic provinces that make up the federal republic all seem to be chafing at Serbian dominance. The Slovenes, for example, are set to declare independence, small in number though they are. Some Austrians think they will have to support the Slovenes militarily; one corner of Austria is densely populated with Slovenes, a remnant of the empire, thus a moral obligation. Others fear the intrusions of the big powers into the regional conflict, into their lives. All understand that if the more populous Serbs were to crush Slovenia, many Slovenes would turn up in Austria as refugees. A continent with many desperate stateless people is something we didn't quite contemplate in our recent ecstatic moments. The new Europe may, then, be more like the old Europe than we had lulled ourselves into thinking. Will this prospect be Gorbachev's trump card with Western liberals, and with the Bush-Baker crowd too, when he clamps down on those conveniently forgotten peoples who won't tolerate any longer being colonized by the Russians?

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